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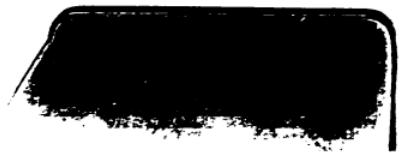
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THE
HOUSES
OF
OSMA AND ALMERIA;
OR,
CONVENT OF ST. ILDEFONSO.

A TALE.

BY REGINA MARIA ROCHE,
AUTHOR OF THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY, DISCAR-
SON, &c.

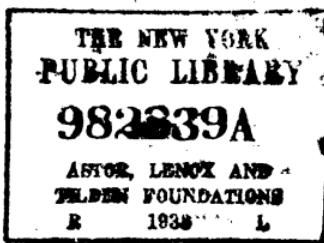
He saw her fair face before him, in the midst of her wandering locks.
knew the maid of Lumen. "What should Cathmor do? His sigh arose; his
came down. But straight he turned away. "This is no time, King of
to wake thy secret soul. The battle is rolled before thee, like a trou-
stream."

OSSLA

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Mary S. Foster.

HOUSES

OF

OSMA AND ALMERIA.

CHAP. I.

He came from his own high hall and seized my hand in g.
Ossi.

VESPERS over, the church of St. Ildefonso quickly evacuated; and to the deep chanting of monks, the solemn strains awakening raptures; the pealing organ's animating sound lifting the to heaven, and through all the long-drawn aisle fretted vaults, swelling the note of praise, a dead stillness had succeeded, rendered still more impressive by the sounds which had immediately preceded it, when a fair form, "fairer than the spirit of hills, when it moves in a sunbeam at noon," noiseless steps, descended from an oratory. It was Elvina, the heiress of Osma, his chief, the loveliest daughter that ever he saw of snow. She cast an eager glance without beholding the object she sought.

whose interference, and almost with a certainty of having found him here, in consequence of knowing he was in the habit of meditating at this hour in these lonely walks, relative to the haughty Rodolph, one of the pretenders to her hand, she now sought—whose presumption, in continuing to importune her with his addresses, she herself vainly endeavoured to check; but which, by requesting the father to remonstrate with him on the subject, she trusted she should at length be freed from; and for which he could not be at a loss for an opportunity, in consequence of Rodolph's frequent visits to the convent, owing to the intimacy subsisting between him and the Abbot, under whose protection he had, in some degree, been.

A generous motive led her to apply to him on the subject, instead of her father. Rodolph, in a great measure, depended on him for his advancement in life; and to acquaint him with his presumption, would, she was convinced, occasion the destruction of all his prospects.

The certainty of his suit being one the duke would never sanction, would of itself have been sufficient to have made her reject it, even though her heart had been unprejudiced in favour of another. This, however, was by no means the case; already had it owned a powerful prepossession, but much she owned an unhappy one; yes, already had her bosom unfeigned the pang of disappointment, already had it with the sigh of regret.

Her steps towards the cloisters, soothed her gloom, that had already involved the eve where through the storied panes looking, the still fiery horizon shed a

But she was here again disappointed. In hopes, however, the father might yet come, she resolved on remaining here a little while; but had scarcely done so, when she was driven from the spot by the approaching voice of the duke, in conversation with the Abbot; and by whom she was aware she could not be discovered here, without inquiries being excited that must lead to the consequences she wished to prevent.

A door in an obscure part of the cloisters afforded her the means of retreating. On passing through it, she found herself in a lonely aisle, in which she had not before been, the cloisters having hitherto been the utmost limit to which she had advanced, lit at the further end by one magnificent window of stained glass, and leading immediately to that wing which, owing to the great extent of the building, it had not been deemed requisite to repair, on the reconquest of the province in which it was situated, from the Saracens.

She proceeded through a succession of mouldering arches and dilapidated aisles, till she found herself in another range of cloisters, surmounted by several lofty but decayed parts of the edifice, on which the evening sun seemed to suspend his beams, as if loth to withdraw them from the hallowed ruins; and where, losing all apprehension of being followed, she paused, for the purpose of remaining till she should think it probable the duke had quitted the church.

The enclosure formed by the cloisters was overrun with high grass and trees; but now, unagitated by a breath of air, all was dread silence here and undisturbed.

As her emotion subsided, the hour, the scene, gradually began to inspire the fair Elvina with that reverential awe, that divine melancholy, which soothes the agitated passions into peace, ameliorates the heart, and disposes it to holy meditation.

Under the influence of the feelings they awakened, she almost wished, still dwelling on the idea of having been deceived, that the solitude of a convent had been her doom.

"For surely," thought she, "the life of the cloistered votaress must be the happiest, since exempt from all that can disturb peace or endanger virtue."

She forgot, in the enthusiasm of the moment, that as storms are requisite to purify the air, so interruptions to tranquillity are sometimes necessary to make us thoroughly enjoy it; and that that is but a negative kind of virtue, which has never been put to the test.

As her eyes wandered round her, an old tomb in the enclosure, and nearly lost in the high weeds and briers that grew about it, caught her attention. The effigy of a youth, in an extended attitude, like that of death, rested on it; and bending over him knelt a weeping female.

The sculpture was rude, but in the design there was something that interested her. She strove to decypher the inscription, but time had rendered it illegible.

"And this neglect shall the ashes of the proudest of us experience," she involuntarily sighed, as, with a chilling sensation, she viewed the rank grass that spired up between the crevices of the tomb, and the various injuries it had sustained, "when the few that loved us, like ourselves, have passed away and been forgotten. At this now neglected tomb, what tears of anguish may not have been shed, what solicitude manifested to guard it from decay!"

Her reflections were interrupted by a deep sigh behind her. Startled, she hastily turned round, and beheld the tall and slender form of a monk leaning against a pillar.

Recovering from her alarm, yet confused at being found lingering here by herself, after a momentary hesitation, she inquired for father Anselm; and, in an under tone, was informed by the monk, that he was then engaged in the confessional, but would soon, he doubted not, be at liberty to join her.

With a slight inclination of the head, she turned from him; but after another glance at the tomb, again directing her looks to him, inquired if he knew to whom it was dedicated?

“To a lovely but unfortunate pair,” he replied, advancing a little way from the pillar, but without throwing back the cowl which enveloped his countenance; “if the tradition concerning them be true, the particulars of their sad story are too tedious for your ear at present—suffice it to know, they were the last descendants of two illustrious families belonging to this province, and who, from an early period, entertained a mutual passion for each other; which, opposed in consequence of a long-cherished feud between their houses, exposed them to disappointments and persecutions, that ended in hurrying them to an early grave, happy but in this, that though not united in life, in death they were not separated, leaving their childless sires to lament too late their obstinacy—too late their yielding to the voice of rancorous and unjustifiable prejudice, instead of that of nature.

“Many are the pilgrimages that have been made to their tomb; and still, notwithstanding the generations that have passed away since their consignment to it, their memory is cherished by the tender and the feeling. When the shadows of evening begin to fall, the glories of this nether scene to fade, when the grass of the tomb whistles hollow in the breeze of night, then the fond enthusiast loves to stray beneath the mournful shadow of the trees that overhang it, and apostrophize the spirits of those whose rest, perhaps, he involuntarily envies!”

There was something in this short recital, but still more in the accents of him who gave it, reviving, as they did, from their strong resemblance to those of a being she in vain strove to forget, the most interesting recollections, which deeply affected Elvina.

Full, clear, and melodious, the voice of the monk was calculated to impart a charm to the simplest relation, to seize and fascinate the soul. She felt as if she could have listened to his mellifluous tones ; and turning her humid eyes upon him, that, like the dewy star of evening, shone in tears, gazed with intense, though unconscious earnestness upon him.

The gracefulness of his slender figure now struck her still more forcibly than it had done in the first instance, heightening the interest he had excited ; his countenance yet remained concealed, but there was something in his air and manner, which induced a belief of his being under the influence of sorrow.

"A sorrow to which, perhaps, was owing his assumption of the cowl," she mentally sighed. "Ah ! if one that could have been relieved by human means, would that I had known it in time!" Then, suddenly recollecting herself, she thanked him for the trouble he had been at in answering her inquiry. "Peace to the souls of the departed ! she cried ; "in the other world may that happiness be theirs," her radiant eyes uplifted to heaven as she spoke, and the shading veil thrown over her, half falling back from her beauteous face, "which in this was denied ! Alas, to what mysterious woes are mortals born !"

"Rather say," returned the monk, with a degree of asperity in his accent, "what woes do they draw upon themselves by their infuriate passions ! how many, like the silent inmates of this tomb, have fallen victims to unbending prejudices ! Heaven is prodigal of its blessings ; but man, erring and violent, mars its goodness, and yielding to the waywardness

of his nature, renders this world the wilderness it is."

Elvina, by a look, assented to the truth of this observation ; and now, warned by the deepening gloom of the lateness of the hour, resolved on tarrying no longer ; conceiving, by this time, there was but little danger of encountering the duke, but to defer to another opportunity her wished-for conversation with her confessor ; accordingly bidding the monk remember her in his orisons, she was moving towards the interior of the building, when, suddenly catching her by the hand, he prevented her.

" And are your commiserative feelings only awaked by those who can no longer feel for themselves ? " he cried, reproachfully ; and sinking on one knee before her, " Oh, let the sufferings of a bosom alive to the keenest pangs of sensibility also interest them ! "

His cowl fell back as he spoke, and gave to the view of the astonished maid, not the sunk features of a pallid son of sadness and despair, but the glowing, the animated ones of a youth in all the bloom of life—the lovely, the beaming, the intelligent ones of Eustace St. Valery—he for whom the secret sigh of her soul had rose.

The Herculean nerve
Braced his young arm ; And, softened in his cheek,
Lived more than woman's sweetness.

For a minute his lovely mistress rolled the large orbs of her majestic eyes upon him in silence, too much affected, too much agitated by his unexpected appearance, to be able to speak ; then a little recovering from the emotion it had excited, and recollecting the apparent cause he had given her for resentment, she drew back, with an effort, but an unavailing one, to disengage her hand.

"Do you then wish, by trying to fly me," he cried, "to confirm all my apprehensions? to convince me you had the cruelty only to raise my hopes, for the purpose of making me still more severely feel the pangs of disappointment? Oh, why not scorn me at once? Better could I have endured your rejection in the first instance, than your cruel refusal after being led to believe my vows acceptable!"

"I did not think to have spoken again to you," said Elvina, a blush of indignation mantling her cheek; "but thus reproached, I cannot maintain the silence I intended. Though from appearances led to believe you merit the refusal you speak of, yet from me you never received it."

"Heaven and earth! do you tell me this?" he cried, in the most impassioned accents, and starting, through emotion, from her feet, "did you not unite with your inexorable father in his rejection of my suit?"

"Never!" returned Elvina, impressively; "how could I unite with him in rejecting a suit that never was preferred?"

"Never!" repeated the agitated youth; "Oh Heavens! can you deny that the marquis of Almeria pleaded in person to him?"

"Certainly not: but he pleaded for his son; not for you."

St. Valery started back, and gazed at her for a few minutes, as though his senses wandered; then again approaching her, "True," cried he "true. What I thought, what I meant was, that after hearing of his overture being rejected, merely through prejudice, I feared I stood but little chance with the duke, in consequence of that which he entertains against my family."

Elvina looked almost incredulously at him; but he persevered in the assertion; and she was at length led to ascribe to the wildness of emotion the strange

and incomprehensible reproaches that had escaped him ; and to a fear of disappointment the silence which had given birth to such injurious surmises in her mind respecting him.

This explanation led to the restoration of her confidence in his professions ; and at the conviction of having regained which his bosom's lord again sat lightly on its throne.

He now proceeded to inform her, that in his present disguise he had not ceased, since he had last seen her, haunting every place where there was the smallest chance of again obtaining an opportunity of addressing her ; and which having at length found, he cried " Oh, let me again," throwing himself at her feet, " avail myself of it, to implore you, in pity to my sufferings, to the agony, the torture I have lately endured, to give me some hope to rest on ! "

" On that subject I thought I had been sufficiently explicit," returned the fair object of his adoration ; " I have already told you, and now repeat the assurance, that the only hope I can give you is, that if the duke permits your addresses, they will not be rejected by me.

" Ah ! that is so vague a hope," rejoined St. Valery, with a desponding look, " after the stern rejection the overture of the marquis Almeria has met with, I fear."

" I know not why you should fear from that circumstance," returned Elvina. " The prejudice which my father entertains against your house has had its origin in too slight a cause, and been of too short duration, not to admit a hope that it may be overcome. That which he cherishes against the family of Almeria is the growth of ages, and the offspring of innumerable provocations. The sons have imbibed it from the sire, and by various circumstances been confirmed in the belief of its being just.

" And does Lady Elvina unite in that belief? does she entertain the same cruel enmity towards the house of Almeria? does she wish, like her father, its misery and extirpation?"

" The blessed Virgin forbid! To no created being do I wish harm; but there is a wide difference between wishing evil to a person, and regarding them; and so far I do confess, I have imbibed my father's dislike to the haughty family of Almeria, our ancient foes, that to the idea of an alliance with their house, I feel an insurmountable repugnance."

" What, without having any personal knowledge of them? without knowing, from your own experience, whether they merit that dislike? Is it consistent with justice to let the innocent suffer for the guilty? to hate the sons because the fathers offended? The present Marquis of Almeria and his son have uniformly, I understand, endeavoured to conciliate the friendship of the duke of Osma, and extinguish those feuds which the unfortunate animosities of their respective ancestors kindled."

" Assuredly, but entirely owing to a selfish motive. The large possessions brought into our family by the marriage of their kinswoman, my mother, with the duke, they are desirous of having finally centre in theirs; and hence their anxiety to cultivate his friendship, as essential to the accomplishment of this wish."

" And would it not be as fair, would it not be as candid, would it not be more consistent with the inherent generosity of Lady Elvina, to ascribe their solicitude for her alliance to her own charms, her own merits, than to this sordid, this hateful, this degrading motive?

Elvina blushed, and for a moment was too much confused by this indirect reproach, a reproach she felt she merited, for having suffered any circumstance

to betray her into so ungenerous an assertion, though one she could not doubt, from the declarations of the duke, being just, to be able to speak.

Then a little recovering herself, and again raising her eyes to St. Valery, " You are agitated !" she cried, surveying him with looks of surprise ; " how is it, St. Valery, that you appear to take so deep an interest in the concerns of the Marquis of Almeria and his son ? It almost seems as if you had come hither to be their advocate, not your own—as if, instead of rejoicing, you were grieved at my rejection of their overture !

" Grieved, say you ? grieved !" repeated the evidently distressed youth. " Oh, Elvina, how can I choose but grieve, when I hear you acknowledge yourself swayed by the prejudices of your father ? Nay, be not offended at the expression ; but as you have confessed having no personal knowledge of either the marquis or his son, is it not fair to surmise, that to the prejudice of the duke is entirely owing the existence of yours, and when I reflect on this, on the influence he has had over you in one instance, I tremble to think of that he may exert when my wishes come to be discussed—he may then be quite as successful in poisoning your mind against me."

" Oh, no, never," she replied, with emotion ; then suddenly checking herself as if fearful of having said too much, and half averting her blushing countenance from the ardent gaze of her suddenly delighted lover, " because," faltering through confusion, " I am aware of his having no just grounds of enmity to you."

" But should he think differently, or rather, in my person, should he resolve on punishing the offences of my brother, then, my Elvina, then what is to be my fate ? Uncertain, as we are, of the issue of my application to him, rather than risk a refusal,

would it not be better at once to let that ceremony take place, which will place our happiness beyond the power of caprice? My friend, Father Anselm, is at hand—the priest, the altar, all ~~is~~ ready. Oh, terminate then at once my suspense, my anxiety—from misery, from despair, lift me to Heaven and happiness!"

"On this subject I will not listen to you," replied Elvina impatiently; "while we can hope, let us hope—you have not yet put the sentiments of the duke to the test; it is therefore too soon to despair."

"Too soon!" deeply sighed St. Valery; "ah, my Elvina!" then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, "the united interest of my friends shall be exerted to render him propitious: but if, after all, he should still continue adverse—"

"Oh, yield not to such a fear!" hastily interrupted Elvina, with a cheek varying at its suggestion.

St. Valery, fearing he should offend by longer persisting in the subject so near his heart, ceased for the present to importune her on it; but so earnestly implored an interview with her the next evening, when, if not entirely out of suspense with regard to the determination of the duke, something, at least, might have transpired to give him an idea of it, that she at length consented to grant him one.

Prudence now demanded her bidding him adieu; reluctantly, perhaps, she thought of doing so: but she was too sensible of the propriety of the measure, to suffer herself to be prevailed on to prolong their interview, though his entreaties were powerfully seconded by the feelings to which the hour gave rise—for by this time the deep gloom of closing day had fallen over the scene, save where through the time-struck arches the rising moon pour'd momentary

gleams of trembling light; and nought was seen, nought was heard, but what was calculated to excite that pensiveness which softens the heart, and renders it still more susceptible of tender impressions—the hollow and indistinct whisperings of the trees in the breeze of night, and the mournful plaints of the birds, that held their ancient solitary reign amidst the mouldering battlements.

St. Valery attended her towards the inner cloisters—they then separated; at the moment of parting, “ I shall remember your bidding,” he cried, with a smile that illumined his whole countenance; “ you desired me not to forget you in my orisons; yet it was unnecessary to do so, for what vow can I prefer to Heaven, in which Elvina is not remembered?”

CHAP. II.

Often met their eyes of love; and happy were their words in secret.

OSSIAN.

THE oratory, to which Elvina now hastened, and which she regained in a state of mind very different from that in which she had quitted it, relieved from the painful idea of thinking him unworthy of her esteem, from whom she had in vain endeavoured to detach her regard, opened into a spacious gallery of the castle of Osma ; of which the convent, owing its erection to an ancestor of the illustrious house of De Hara, in pursuance of a vow made in a moment of danger, formed a wing, altogether constituting an immense fabric—one of those Gothic and magnificent piles, that cannot be gazed at without the memory of the past being awakened in the mind, the soul sent back to the days of other years.

It stood at the base of a rocky eminence in the province of Andalusia, and at some distance from Seville, shrouded in every direction, but that opening to the Guadalquivir, by magnificent woods, the growth of centuries—their deep gloom beautifully contrasted by the rich groves of orange and lemon, for which this province is so famed, and which completely margined the lawn that spread before the building—still extending beyond them on the left, the woods stretched their dusky shades to the steep acclivities in the rear, and climbing to their summits, formed high in air

"A woodland quire,"

where at every step,

"Solemn and slow, the shadows blacker fell,
And all was awful listening gloom around."

From these heights, wildly straying through the intertwined roots of the trees, a thousand limpid rills descended, fertilizing the gardens beneath, and supplying the scattered fountains, the harmony of whose murmurs was not less delightful to the ear, than the resplendent whiteness of their waters to the eye.

To the lovers of the chace, the castle was a delightful residence, its distant woods and mountains abounding with game; nor to the admirers of the beauties of nature, and the votaries of festive pleasure, was it a less attractive one, the scenes about it being of the most enchanting description; and in its ancient halls the voice of sprightly mirth resounded, the trembling harps of joy were strung, bards sung the exploits of heroes, or the heaving breast of love.

The duke of Osma, its possessor at this period, and chief of the illustrious family of De Hara, was now in the autumn of his days. To the solidity of maturity, the energies of a mind unimpaired by age, he united abilities of the first order; pre-eminently gifted by nature, he shone alike in the field and the cabinet; commanding in his mien, lofty and elevated in his air and language, it was impossible to deny him attention; nor was he altogether deficient in those qualities that conciliate esteem: seldom, however, did he sufficiently relax from the natural haughtiness of his character to obtain it. The most arrogant of mankind, he aspired to universal homage; nor knew how to forgive the slightest opposition to

his hereditary claims to distinction. Pride was his governing principle, the spring of all his actions ; he was generous, but it was from this motive—revengeful, but also owing to the same cause. The feeling that rendered him impatient under the appearance of an obligation, rendered him raging at the shadow of an injury : he was, in short, a turbulent subject, an unsteady friend, as are all who yield to sudden irritations, and an implacable enemy. Even his daughter, the fair Elvina, seemed more endeared to him by the gratification she afforded this passion, than by her many virtues ; yet that he was strongly attached to her, it was but fair to surmise, since no other reason than his affection for her could be assigned for his not forming a second engagement, death having early dissolved that between him and her mother.

Elvina was all that thought can frame of elegance and grace—to the beauty of youth, a figure that might have served as a model for a sculptor, were added all those graces which charm and inspire love ; every feature was expressive of mind ; her fine dark eyes beamed with intelligence ; her complexion fluctuated, as pain or pleasure passed over her varying brow, now displaying all the delicacy of the fragile lily, now the bright glow of the unfolding rose ; and her smile was rendered resistless, by the sensibility with which it was replete.

Brought up under the immediate care of an amiable female of the name of Olivia, she was early instructed in every virtue, and guarded against that haughtiness which characterized her family ; so that to all but that noble pride which elevates the mind, she had remained a stranger.

An exalted imagination led her to the study of all that was grand and elegant, the sublime in nature, and the pathetic in composition ; and to an exquisite

taste for each, was added a genius capable of copying one and excelling in the other. Her voice, sweet and plaintive beyond expression, proclaimed her bosom the shrine of pity; when she sung, softer than the harp to raise the song of grief, it failed not, originating as it appeared from her heart, to expire in that of her enraptured hearer. Such was Elvina, the heiress of Osma.

“A lavish planet reigned when she was born,
And made her of such kindred mould to Heaven,
She seemed more Heavens than his.”

Her attractions were of too powerful a nature not early to occasion many competitors for her hand; but though among the numerous candidates for it who bowed at her shrine, and felt or feigned a flame, some of the most distinguished grandees of Castile were to be ranked, her rejection of them met not with that opposition she had apprehended from the duke: but his forbearance, in these instances, was not so entirely owing to his tenderness for her, and consequent repugnance to force her inclination, as she tried to flatter herself, as to his entertaining still more exalted expectations for her. The Queen had long been in a declining state; and, from the admiration with which she was regarded, he was not without hopes, that, if an opportunity offered, she might be elevated to the throne—hopes which induced him to decide on not being precipitate in urging her to form an engagement: but not to this ambitious motive was owing her rejection of her different admirers.

In the delightful shades around the castle, fond of all the innocent amusements of the country, she loved to wander where the warblings of the birds that perched on the boughs, rendering still more enchant-

ing the beauties of the scene, added to the murmurs of distant waters, formed a concert infinitely more gratifying to her mind than any of the pleasures afforded by magnificence ; and odoriferous shrubs perfumed the morning air, and exhaling their balmy sweets, to add at sunset to the charms of the evening walk.

With a book in her hand, she delighted to stray through the fragrant shrubberies, or long receding alleys, so propitious, from their solitude and silence, to meditation and reverie ; and thence, the freshness of the morning past, to plunge into the midwood shade,

“ Where scarce a sunbeam wandered through the gloom
And on the dark green grass, beside the brink
Of haunted stream, or in some gelid covert,
Woodbine wrought,”

and, fresh bedewed with ever-sporting streams, indulge in those lonely musings which

“ Sooth every gust of passion into peace,
All but the swellings of the softened heart,
That waken, not disturb, the tranquil mind.”

But these lonely pleasures were for a time suspended, by the extraordinary circumstance of her steps being haunted by an invisible musician :—on a sudden, whenever unaccompanied, at which times she never ventured out of sight of the castle, the most enchanting music met her ear—strains so soft, so sweet, so truly seraphic, that they might almost have been taken for an invitation to the realms of bliss ; and which still receding as she approached, seemed to intimate to her to follow.

Various were the methods had recourse to for the purpose of discovering the person from whom they

tame—but in vain ; and at length, from this circumstance, and their only being addressed to Lady Elvina, the superstitious were led to believe them a supernatural warning to her of some approaching loss ; while the more suspicious regarded them as the stratagem of some disappointed lover, to entice her to a distance from the castle, that might favour an intention of carrying her off. Elvina herself sometimes almost wavered between the two opinions—sometimes was tempted to imagine they proceeded either from some spirit to mortals good,

“ Or the unseen genius of the wood.”

At length, the impression made on her mind by the circumstance fading from it, she ventured one evening, at sun set, to a favourite retreat of hers, a pavilion romantically situated amongst the woods, at a little distance from the castle, and through their openings commanding partial views of the Guadaluquer, now reflecting the gorgeous clouds of evening, while the thrilling song of the nightingale, resounded through the shades, and the air all around was scented with the fragrance of the orange. Lost in the contemplation of the imagery here exhibited to her view, she remained fixed to one spot, till startled by a deep sigh, when, hastily turning, she caught a glimpse of a figure retreating from an open lattice immediately behind her.

Not a little alarmed, the invisible musician recurring at the moment to her recollection, she would instantly have fled the building ; but was prevented by the appearance of a young and elegant cavalier at the entrance.

“ Pardon this intrusion,” he said, in accents the most deprecating, and, as her eyes met his, presenting to her view a countenance of the most exquisite

beauty, "but I feared you were alarmed, and could not, therefore, prevent myself from coming forward, to assure you there is no cause for apprehension."

"Your appearance, Sir," returned Elvina, endeavouring to recollect herself, "forbids it; otherwise, I confess the unexpected sight of a stranger here would probably have excited it."

"To prevent the circumstance occasioning even suspicion," he rejoined, "permit me to explain who I am."

Elvina became more embarrassed, but did not attempt to move.

"Yet, in doing so," continued he, after a transient pause, during which his eyes were anxiously fastened on her, with an expression that deepened the blush on her cheek, and quickened the pulsations of her heart, "I may, perhaps, only remove alarm to excite indignation. Though my ardent, my restless gratitude has long sought this opportunity, long sighed to be permitted to give utterance to the feelings you have inspired, yet now that I have obtained it, I tremble to avail myself of it, lest I should offend; yet, since the explanation now seems unavoidable, know then, he whom the chance of war recently threw into the power of your father—he whose captivity has excited so generous a sympathy in your bosom, who owes, to the interest you have so feelingly taken in his fate, unreturnable obligations—now stands before you."

Elvina started, but gave no utterance to the surprise with which the avowal filled her.

"By chance," he proceeded, I discovered a secret door in my prison, so slightly guarded as to give me egress from it; and from time to time since the discovery, have availed myself of it, to hover about the haunts I understood you frequented, in hopes of at length obtaining the opportunity I now have of ex-

pressing the grateful sense I entertain of your goodness."

Elvina again started. This acknowledgment led to a suspicion that in him she saw the invisible musician ; and, after a momentary hesitation, revealing it, he confessed her not being mistaken, acknowledging that he had recourse to his guitar, in hopes of drawing her by it to such a distance from the castle, as would render it safe for him to introduce himself to her notice ; and that his being able to elude pursuit, was owing to his retreating to his prison, the moment he beheld her, through the thick brakes that concealed him from her view, bending her steps towards it, or any one approaching her.

" And why," suddenly as well as earnestly interrogated Elvina, " why not profit by the power you have of quitting your prison to effect your escape?"

" Because I am almost convinced I could not do so without involving others in disagreeable consequences—it would be scarcely possible to persuade the duke but that some one belonging to him assisted in it ; and a thousand times rather would I suffer unhappiness myself than be the cause of injury to any one."

The generosity evinced by this declaration was not lost upon the sensitive heart of Elvina ; for a moment her eyes were bent to the ground, by the emotion it excited ; then again uplifting them to his illumined countenance—" Doubt not," she cried, yielding, in the warmth of her feelings, to the idea, that what she wished would yet indeed be the case, " that your consideration for others will yet be rewarded. The nature of the duke," she added, speaking of him as filial reverence and fond affection made her think, " is truly noble ; and whether the terms proposed for your release are complied with or not, the effervescence of resentment subsid-

ed, he will, I am sure, release you : in the meanwhile, I trust the degree of liberty you enjoy will prevent your feeling your confinement so irksome as might otherwise be the case."

" Oh ! how can that confinement feel irksome which excites your sympathy ? how," he added, still more passionately, " those chains feel heavy which you have sought to lighten ? But, permit me to add, the liberty you allude to I shall not make use of, should I find my availing myself of it banishes you your usual walks."

Elvina blushed and hesitated ; the prepossession he had excited was of too powerful a nature not to induce a wish to see him again : but delicacy made her shrink from any thing like a concerted meeting, and the same feeling now occasioned her immediate return to the castle.

Her retreat from the pavilion was not opposed ; but " Oh, how fugitive are the moments of happiness !" exclaimed the interesting prisoner, as he conducted her down the woody steep on which it was erected, and where the mingling trees formed a bower over their heads, almost impervious to the faint twilight that now prevailed.

In a state of agitation which she had never before experienced, Elvina flew to confide to the bosom of her beloved Olivia the adventure of the evening, not failing, by the terms in which she spoke of him, to heighten the interest she had previously felt for the prisoner.

John the first, son of Henry, count of Trastamere, at this period sat upon the throne. He had not long ascended it, when don Ferdinand, king of Portugal, avowed a determination of taking up the cause of his two cousins, the daughters of the late don Pedro, surnamed the Cruel, and whose throne he asserted the king of Castile unjustly held, although crowned with the unanimous consent of Spain.

In consequence of which declaration, considerable detachments were sent to the frontiers, chiefly under the command of the duke of Osma.

But though immense preparations were made on each side, and every thing assumed the gloomy and portentous aspect of determined warfare, the affair ended, in the course of a few months, without any thing more serious taking place than a few skirmishes, owing to the imbecile and fearful nature of the king; or, perhaps, as was more generally believed, the influence of his favourite, Fernando Audere, whose partiality to the Spaniards was notorious throughout the kingdom.

In those skirmishes the duke of Osma still came off victorious. Satisfied, however, with fame, he dismissed without ransom all the prisoners he had made in those engagements but one, a Gascon knight, named Sir Eustace St. Valery, and him he declared nothing but compliance with the conditions proposed for his release should induce him to ransom.

A few years previous to this period, he had been to Paris, on a mission from the court of Castile. In his way back he slept for a few days at the castle of a noble baron in Gascony, the brother of Sir Eustace. Here a tilting match took place, between a squire of his and one belonging to the castle, which ended fatally for the latter. It being evident, however, that to accident entirely was owing the unfortunate circumstance, his opponent was acquitted of all blame respecting it, except by the baron himself, a man of fierce and haughty manners, and who happened to be particularly attached to the unhappy squire. In rage and resentment at his death, he declared he had come unfairly by it, and his consequent determination of detaining the offender his prisoner for life.

Against so unjust a determination the duke of Osma warmly remonstrated; finding, however,

expostulations vain, he proceeded to take more active measures for the deliverance of his squire : in these, however, he was equally unsuccessful. After a sharp conflict between his people and those of the castle, he was compelled to yield to the superior force of the enemy, and quit the field without having accomplished the purpose for which it was taken. From that moment he breathed nothing but revenge against the insolent contemner of the laws of hospitality ; but till the present period had no opportunity of retaliating upon him, in any degree, for his conduct.

The moment he found his brother in his power, who, with several other knights from France, ambitious of signalizing themselves in arms, had joined the standard of the king of Portugal, he despatched a herald to acquaint him with the circumstance, and make known the condition on which alone he could be induced to release him : the liberation of his squire.

On his return to his castle, he lodged him in an unoccupied tower—too much incensed, by the recollection of his brother's conduct, to hold any communication with him, or show him those indulgences his rank gave him a claim to from him.

The susceptible Elvina was deeply affected by his confinement ; she could not reconcile it to herself that the innocent should suffer for the guilty ; and, far from aiding or supporting his brother in his violence and injustice, he was absent from the castle at the time the catastrophe which provoked this conduct took place, and on his return exerted himself to obtain the release of his prisoner ; in short, she felt such regret for it, that though not utterly unacquainted with the sternness and implacability of the duke, she could not resist remonstrating with him on the subject, but in vain ; and had no other method of alleviating the uneasiness she suffered on his account, than by commanding every possible attention and in-

dulgence to be shown him—commands which, together with the effort she had made for his enlargement, were conveyed to the ear of St. Valery, and confirmed in his bosom sentiments which, unconsciously, she had previously inspired.

The next evening she, perhaps, involuntarily, drew Olivia towards those embowered walks, those delightful shades, which they had for some time forsaken. The reflection that, as she had not given St. Valery any reason to hope he might find her here, their meeting, if one did take place, would be accidental, prevented her thinking herself guilty of any impropriety in running the risk of such a circumstance.

They had not proceeded far when St. Valery suddenly appeared before them. A certain consciousness tinged the cheek of Elvina, at the moment, with a blush deeper than had ever before been spread over it—a blush which that of St. Valery seemed to catch. For a moment he stood confused and silent, then raising his eyes to her's—"For the world," cried he, "I would not be thought presumptive or intrusive, but my steps will obey the impulse of my heart."

His appearance and manner confirmed the prepossession conceived in his favour by Olivia: but the more amiable, the more interesting she thought him, the more dangerous she conceived the growing intimacy between him and her fair charge; and, as an incumbent duty, failed not, the moment they were again alone, to admonish her of the necessity of checking it—aware of the misery, from her perfect knowledge of the temper of the duke, which an attachment unsanctioned by him would draw on her.

Whatever might have been the feelings of Elvina on the occasion, she promised to attend to her admonition—nor wilfully disregarded it; but St. Valery,

the ardent, the enamoured St. Valery, watched her steps too closely, not to obtain another and another interview, which he at length availed himself of to avow his passion ; nor rested till he had drawn from the agitated Elvina a promise, that, if sanctioned by her father, she would not reject his suit ; but, though conditional, scarcely had it passed her lips, ere her apprehensive delicacy caused her to repent it ; and she hastened to her Olivia to reveal it, convinced, that if she had erred, she would assist her in regaining the path from which she had deviated.

Olivia was concerned at what she heard ; yet when she came to reflect that the promise was only conditional, and that his virtues, his accomplishments, the equality of their births and fortunes, might yet, united to the consideration of his not being a party in the outrage of his brother, influence the duke to favour his addresses, she sought not to persuade her to recall it.

The disclosure of their mutual attachment made no alteration in the conduct of Elvina ; she still scrupulously avoided the places where there was a chance of meeting him ; but he still continued to see her ; and, spite of herself, she could not be displeased at meetings so productive of happiness.

But the transports of St. Valery, though great, were not unalloyed ; more convinced than his daughter would allow herself to be, of the stubborn nature of the duke, he often trembled to think of the opposition his wishes might experience from him ; and, under this painful apprehension, often implored his fair mistress to say what her decision would be, should he find it verified ; but still failed of drawing an explicit answer from her, her heart sinking at the surmise—a surmise which at once shadowed every prospect, since, though every hope of happiness centered in the idea of their union, no circumstance, she resol-

ved, should ever induce her to swerve from the duty she owed her father.

At length the herald despatched to Gascony, to acquaint his brother with his captivity, and make known the terms proposed for his release, returned, and by his report, confirmed St. Valery's apprehensions of lasting confinement, the baron positively refusing to accede to them; and it was confidently asserted, the squire said, that he was happy at a pretext for refusing to liberate him, owing to the jealousy he entertained of his popularity at home, and his wish to keep him out of the enjoyment of a rich heritage which had lately devolved to him.

Elvina was present at this statement; she looked earnestly in the countenance of the duke, to see what effect it had upon him, but could discern no symptoms of his being affected by it. The chill of disappointment and fear pervaded her feelings. Their hopes of a union depended entirely upon his liberation; but not solely on this account did she regret his lengthened captivity—had she never seen him, had he still been an object of indifference to her, she still would have regretted it, on account of its injustice, and the consequent imputations it drew upon her father.

Urged by these considerations, and a thousand other nameless ones, she threw herself at his feet, and conjured him to hear her.

"Hitherto," returned the duke, "I have ever lent a ready ear to your solicitations; but now, from your look, your manner, I am so thoroughly convinced you are about preferring one that ought not to be granted, that I confess I feel little inclined to listen to you."

"Oh! my father, you are indeed mistaken," cried the trembling suppliant, "'tis one I know you must approve; not for myself do I plead—no, the most in-

dulgent of parents has left me nought to solicit on my own account, but for the—unhappy—for—St. Valery!"

"St. Valery!" repeated the duke, starting back, and surveying her with a look of anger; "fear you not again interfering on his account?"

"'Tis not solely on his account; Oh no, my father! 'tis equally on your own; for well am I convinced, from the nobleness of your nature, that should the sufferings under which he now groans prove too mighty for him, the despair that now overwhelms him fatal, the reflection of being accessory to his death would forever banish happiness from your bosom."

"Dread you not the consequences of your temerity!" demanded the duke with sternness.

"As the heaviest misfortune that could befall me, should I consider the displeasure of my father; but in this instance I cannot—no, in pleading the cause of the unhappy I will not believe it possible I can incur it."

"Be not so certain," said the duke, but with a certain relaxation of features, that gave new life to her hopes.

"Oh! yes, I am certain, she repeated, encouraged by the altered expression of his countenance; Oh! my father, grant me but this one request; restore St. Valery to liberty, and through life the recollection of your goodness in complying with it will check any murmurs that may arise at the refusal of others."

"Of that I am rather doubtful, since I have generally found, that the accomplishment of one difficult point emboldens us to attempt another; yet I don't know but that I am somewhat inclined to put you to the test."

Elvina clasped her hands in a transport of joy and gratitude.

"Yes," resumed the duke, after a pause of some minutes, secretly pleased at having a pretext for liberating St. Valery, since latterly he had begun to experience something like regret and remorse on the subject of his confinement, though, till the present moment, a fear of incurring the imputation of unsteadiness, by releasing him after the solemn resolution he had avowed to the contrary, made him hesitate about it, "I will comply with your request for the purpose of putting your moderation to the test. St. Valery shall be immediately released: but no professions," observing her again about throwing herself at his feet, from which he had motioned her to rise; "let your actions evince your gratitude; they are the only proofs I admit of sincerity."

Elvina bowed in obedience to his commands, and withdrew. In the retirement of her chamber she gave unrestrained indulgence to the feelings of her heart. Tears of joy—joy of the most delicious nature, bedewed her lovely cheeks, at the idea of being instrumental to the liberation of St. Valery. Judging of his heart by her own, she pictured to herself the transports he would experience, at the thought of being indebted to her for it; doubly precious in his eyes would his restored liberty be, she was convinced, since obtained through her means; and with her sensations was mingled the pleasing idea of the avowal his enlargement might speedily lead to.

CHAP. III.

An ancient feud
Hereditary evil was the source
Of their misfortunes.

DOUGLAS

DELICACY forbade her throwing herself again in his way ; it would seem, she thought as if she required a repetition of his vows, a fresh assurance of his constancy : yet her heart sighed to receive his parting adieu ; but she resisted its impulse, though not without struggles that cost her dear. He departed the next morning ; and that day there was no brightness in the sun for Elvina, no sweetness in the air, no music in the woods. All appeared a gloomy void, a dreary blank.

Towards its close she repaired to the pavilion where she had first consciously seen him. Softened to still greater tenderness by the recollections here revived, she now almost repented not having afforded him an opportunity of bidding her adieu. " Yet let me not regret it," she cried ; " my motives for denying it to him St. Valery must properly appreciate ; and an increase of esteem can scarcely occasion a diminution of affection."

But should they never meet again. Embarrassed by difficulties, by his cruel and illiberal brother, should he be prevented from applying to the duke, or, more distressing supposition, should her father reject his suit, what then was to become of them ? but from this torturing fear she strove to detach her thoughts. " Let me not anticipate misery," she

exclaimed ; " let me only hope that should disappointment be my lot, I may be endued with patience to bear it."

The silence, the solitude of the pavilion were too pleasing to her present feelings to permit her to think of hastily quitting it. The sun was by this time set ; but the moon rising in cloudless majesty over the high summits of the neighbouring mountains, and spreading her silver emanations far over the wide extended scene, supplied with a softened light, his place, while the accompanying stillness rendered still more distinct the soothing voice of distant water-falls and the whisperings of the night breeze in the woods.

The agitation of her mind yielded to the powerful influence of the hour ; but in proportion as it calmed her perturbation it deepened her melancholy.

Still, still her thoughts dwelt on the possibility : was of no more beholding St. Valery ; " and could it be so," she sighed, " shall I then be forgotten ? Ah ! cruel and selfish indeed I would be, if I not wish I might ; for, doomed to be separated what avail whether sincere your vows or not ? And yet it would sooth my distress to think I should be lastingly remembered by you ; yes, St. Valery, I cannot, cannot forbear hoping that at no happy rival's feet you will pass the hours bestowed by me."

" Oh, never, never !" exclaimed an impassioned voice— " Oh, never, never !" repeated a tall and graceful figure, rushing into the pavilion ; and the next instant beheld St. Valery at her feet.

Surprise, confusion, joy too, perhaps, for a few minutes suspended the power of utterance : then, a little recovering, in trembling accents, and with a cheek suffused with blushes, she inquired why she saw him there.

" What a question !" cried St. Valery, with something of tender reproach in his accents ; " could you

imagine I would depart without again seeing you? without again breathing my vows at your feet? without giving utterance to the gratitude, the adoration, with which you have inspired me? Oh! if you did, you indeed wronged me!"

"No, no," replied the trembling Elvina, with warmth: "trust me, I did justice to your feelings; I felt assured you would not have departed without seeing me, had an opportunity for so doing occurred; yes, my heart told me all you wished, all you would have said."

"All!" repeated St. Valery, emphatically, and still more fervently pressing the white hand he had gently seized; "all!" cried he with a smile, and fastening his dark eyes expressively upon hers, "did it tell you all?—of the vows I should have reiterated, that in freeing me from the fetters imposed on me by your father, you have cast others round me, which only can break?"

"St. Valery," replied Elvina, with much emotion, "I must no longer listen to this language, except sanctioned by my father; you either forget I am not your own mistress, or encourage a hope I may forget circumstance myself."

"No," returned St. Valery, passionately, "I harbour not an idea of you calculated to offend; nor ever would I have attempted to engage you in any thing like a clandestine correspondence, but for the unhappy prejudices which forbade the public avowal of passion. No, my proud heart would have shrunk from a procedure so apparently indicative of an inferiority I do not acknowledge: in point of merit, who can be considered the equal of Lady Elvina? but, both from birth and fortune, it is my transport to think I am entitled to her hand. The period for putting these prejudices to the test is now arrived; you have encouraged me to hope they may be overcome; but,

also I fear the contrary. Greatly, however, would the anxiety occasioned by this apprehension be lessened, could I hope that, let the decision of the duke be what it may, I should still find you inclined to favour my suit."

"With a false hope I never will delude you, St. Valery," replied his fair mistress, in an agitated tone; "hear me now decisively assure you, that no consideration shall ever induce me to violate the duty I owe my father—I owe him more than the common obedience of a child. On my account, though so young when deprived of my mother, he has refrained from forming another engagement. To me he has ever been uniformly tender and indulgent. In my principles he has reposed a confidence not often met with in Spanish fathers: in proportion to this confidence would be his resentment, at finding it abused. With the sigh with which my ingratitude would heave his noble breast, would mingle a malediction on me; and not even you, St. Valery, could console me under it!"

A heavy gloom for some minutes darkened the features of St. Valery, during which he remained silent; then again raising his eyes to hers, "Nothing that can possibly tend to soften him in my favour shall be left undone: but, oh! my Elvina, thou whom, whether granted or denied to my longing arms, I must for ever adore, my heart misgives me, that all my efforts will prove unavailing. But listen to the communication I have to make, and you will then be better able to judge whether or not these fears are groundless." He seated himself beside her on the sofa as he spoke, and, after an agitating pause of some minutes—"Know then," said he, in a voice solemnly impressive, "that —"

What further he would have said was prevented by the abrupt entrance of Olivia. On recovering from

the surprise she experienced at seeing him, she informed Elvina, that the Duke was following, for the purpose of supping in the pavilion with a large party of knights and ladies just arrived at the castle.

St. Valery's vexation at this circumstance was unspeakable. As he started up to be gone, he eagerly demanded of Elvina, whether she could not grant him an interview the next morning; but this the newly arrived guests rendered utterly impossible; something he then would have said; but as he opened his lips, the voice of the duke sounded in his ear, and obliged him to fly.

The difficulties which, from various circumstances, there was reason to suppose his brother would throw in the way of his taking possession of his estate, was the subject on which Elvina concluded he wished to have a longer conversation with her; and this idea prevented that anxiety and impatience she might have otherwise experienced respecting it. Spite of herself, however, doubts would obtrude, relative to the result of his application to the duke, and tranquillity and cheerfulness fled before the anxiety of incertitude.

About the period at which she might have expected to have heard from him, the long-imprisoned squire of her father made his unexpected appearance at the castle. The first act of St. Valery, on arriving in Gascony, was to demand his liberation: this being denied, he accomplished it by force; and, in consequence, open hostilities commenced between him and his brother.

This information accounted to Elvina for his silence to the duke, till these unhappy feuds were adjusted; she knew it was impossible for him to make any arrangement for their union, and she trembled to think of the events that might take place ere he could avow himself, if, indeed, the issue of his quarrel ever allowed him to do so—apprehensive of the authority

the duke might exercise over her, should the addressees of any of his rivals meet his approbation.

About this period, too, the marriage of the King with Beatrice of Portugal took place, his queen, Jane of Arragon, having died some time before, to the utter disappointment of the ambitious hopes of the duke of Osma ; but which, aware of the triumph it would afford his enemies, he veiled under a show of rejoicing, giving the most magnificent entertainments on the occasion : and nearly at the same time, to the great surprise of Elvina, in consequence of the long-existing feuds between their families, the marquis of Almeria solicited her hand in marriage for his son, Don Ferdinand de Hara, a young nobleman of the most amiable manners and brilliant accomplishments, heir of a line which generous heroes filled, the help as well as glory of Castile. In his dark eyes beamed the valour which had immortalized their names ; and already had he given such proofs of his prowess, already so distinguished himself in the fields of the valiant, that with justice he was considered the first of the Castilian knights.

But though fame did ample justice to his merits, though every tongue bore testimony to them, such was the light in which the prejudices of the duke taught her to regard his family, that even though her heart had been disengaged, she would not have needed his commands to refuse him.

But how little was she aware, at the moment she assured herself of this, at the moment in which she solemnly asserted to the duke, that consciously she had never seen him, or, of course, given any encouragement to his addresses, that it was to him she had vowed perpetual constancy ! to him, under the borrowed name of St. Valery, she had plighted her faith !

The Marquis Almeria, his father, was at this period far advanced in life. Of the union, which he

had not formed till a late period, and which death soon dissolved, Don Ferdinand was the only issue. To a greater ascendancy over himself than the duke of Osma, feelings as keen when roused, but not so easily irritated, he added abilities equally distinguished; but advancing years had now rendered him better qualified to plan than to execute—to shine as a Nestor, than to act as an Achilles. Ambitious of power, yet still more desirous of the approbation of his own heart, he had never for a moment deviated from the open road of integrity to accomplish his wishes, never permitted the solicitudes of ambition to involve him in the perplexities of intrigue :

“ What he would highly,
That would he holily ; would not play false,
And yet would highly win.”

Too liberal to imbibe prejudices from the opinion of others—too generous to be hurt at a competition in fame, or refuse doing justice even to the merits of an enemy, he had long paid the tribute of respect and admiration to the distinguished abilities of the duke of Osma ; and under the influence of the feelings they excited, more than once made overtures for a reconciliation between their long contending houses.

These overtures were haughtily repulsed by the unbending Osma. Aspiring to pre-eminence on every occasion, he could not view with complacency a man who so often disputed his claims to it ; and hence, to his being his competitor in fame, even more than to his being of the house he was early taught to detest, was owing his cold and repelling conduct towards him.

The enmity which had lasted through successive generations between their families, to the destruction of multitudes of their adherents, and frequently to

the endangering of the state, had had its origin in a cause nearly similar to that which provoked this inveterate dislike to the Marquis.

Elevated, in rank and abilities, above the rest of their contemporaries, the houses of Lara and De Hara beheld no rivalry but between themselves. Proud, arrogant, and aspiring, they became disgusted at an equality which prevented the homage of the public from being undivided ; and in open acts of hostility, and continual efforts to depreciate one another, gave way to their mutual jealousy and ambition.

A conflict in the reign of Alfonzo the Eighth, confirmed their deadly hatred of each other. Upon the death of Sancho, his faithful minister, Don Guiterez De Hara still more fully evinced than he had ever done before, his right to that title, by promoting the election of his son, Alfonzo, who, through his means, when only three years old, was acknowledged King of Castile, and himself regent.

The envy of his declared enemies, the family of De Lara, awakened by his appointment, they excited a similar feeling among the nobles ; and possessing themselves by fraud of the person of the king, asserted by force their pretensions to the regency. In consequence, a civil war would have ensued, but for the sudden death of Guiterez ; immediately after which, Don Manrique De Lara was formally recognised as regent of Castile.

But gratified ambition neither soothed his turbulent spirit into composure, nor induced him to overlook the opposition it had met with. The family of De Hara were the objects of his indefatigable hatred ; and in obeying its dictates, by depriving Ferdinand, brother of the deceased Guiterez, of the government of Toledo, he lost his life.

Brave and ambitious as the rest of his family, Ferdinand firmly resisted his efforts to deprive him

of his government. Manrique was killed in the contest, and his adherents dispersed by the victor : his place, however, was quickly supplied by Nugnez De Lara, who, in the name of the king, levied a new army, proclaimed the family of De Hara traitors, and summoned Toledo to open her gates to her sovereign, a summons which obeying, Ferdinand was compelled to fly, and at the court of Seville seek an asylum, among the enemies of his religion and country.

Under the name of the king, Nugnez ruled for some time with despotic sway ; yet the party of Hara had rather been surprised than vanquished. From Seville, Ferdinand, their chief, repaired to the court of Leon ; and was received with open arms by a monarch who had himself experienced the arrogance of De Lara.

His own adherents were still numerous ; the mar-
youth of Leon were permitted to march beneath
standard ; and at the head of a powerful army,
the proud exile entered Castile, to solicit his own par-
don, and the punishment of his rival.

Nugnez flew to arms, to encounter his hereditary enemy ; he met him with a large body of hastily collected forces, and their differences were terminated in a battle, which proved adverse to the house of Lara—two counts of that name were slain, and Nugnez himself made prisoner. Contrary, however, to his expectations, his captivity was of short duration—Ferdinand, possessed of a generosity to which he was an utter stranger, received him with kindness, and dismissed him with magnanimity—aspiring to the more noble revenge of subduing a second time by his generosity, him whom in the first instance he had conquered by his arms.

On the dismissal of the haughty Nugnez, he led back his victorious followers to Leon, without hav-

ing once permitted any act which could violate the dignity of his sovereign ; and in a marriage with a sister of his royal protector, who properly appreciated his merits, and knew how to reward them, forever renounced his ungrateful country.

But so little cause for triumph is there in this changeful scene, the haughty family which had occasioned this renunciation, were, in their turn, compelled to leave it.

Alfonzo and his queen dying within a short period of each other, while their son, Henry the First, was yet but an infant, the regency devolved on his sister, Berengera. This illustrious lady, early initiated to adversity in the school of persecution, by the see of Rome, for her marriage with her near relation, the king of Leon, a persecution set on foot, not so much from conscientious motives, as for the purpose of fomenting differences between the neighbouring kingdoms, had, immediately after the dissolution of it, returned to the court of her father ; where, by her patient endurance of affliction, and the active and affectionate performance of every social duty, she had so endeared herself to the generous Castilians, that with pleasure they acknowledged her pretensions to the title she assumed upon the death of her mother—a title still further supported by the last testament of Alfonzo, in which he had named her to the regency, in case of the death of the queen. The powerful and ambitious house of Lara alone opposed her claims to it. In a national assembly their intrigues prevailed ; and the reins of government were wrested from the hands of Berengera, to be committed to those of Don Alvaro de Lara.

The arrogance of his nature knew no bounds ; yet he might, perhaps, have triumphed with impunity, but that he presumed to invade the immunities of

the clergy. Their resentment was implacable—the churches resounded with his sacrilegious oppressions, and the discontents of the people encouraged the party of Berengera to vindicate her right; in consequence, the kingdom again became agitated by the storm of civil war. Ere it had long raged, however, it was put an end to by the death of Henry, who, as he pursued his youthful amusements, was killed by a tile accidentally thrown by one of his companions, and which pitching on his head, instantly proved fatal to him, and also to the ambitious hopes of Don Alvaro, the title of his sister, Berengera, to the crown being instantly recognised in an assembly of the states. Yet, notwithstanding, the turbulent house of Lara did not retire from power without a struggle to maintain it; but their efforts for the purpose were rendered unavailing, by the tide of loyalty, the cities most attached to their faction opening their gates without hesitation to the queen; and, too proud to remain deprived of power where they had held such unlimited sway, they withdrew into exile.

Berengera, after holding the sceptre for a few weeks, resigned it to Ferdinand, her son by the king of Leon; and who, in after ages, from his distinguished victories over the Moors, obtained the surname of Saint.

The court of Leon was the place where Alvaro and his adherents sought a shelter from public disgrace: but to the mortification of appearing before his ancient adversary as an exile from his native country, he never would have submitted, but that, from his knowledge of the disposition of the king of Leon, he conceived, through his means, he should be able to accomplish the revenge he sought for, on all who had offended him.

His hopes were not disappointed ; for, as the case is often, the bosom inflamed with ambition is seldom susceptible of the tender passions.

Led by his artful representations to believe that a favourable opportunity for aggrandizing himself now occurred, from the youth of Ferdinand, the king of Leon ceased to remember the close ties that connected them, ceased to recognise in the sovereign of Castile his son ; and accordingly, ere the coronation of the youthful monarch was well over, the unwelcome and unexpected intelligence of his unnatural father and rebellious subject being on their march to Burgos, at the head of a powerful army, was received.

The ardent loyalty of the Castilians prevented the consternation this intelligence might otherwise have occasioned ; a numerous and gallant body of cavalry were hastily assembled, and quickly succeeded in obliging the king of Leon to abandon his unjustifiable enterprise. He acknowledged his error, solicited the friendship of his son, and was then permitted quietly to retrace his way back to his own territories, whither his treacherous adviser, Alvaro, had fled before him.

But the failure of this enterprise was not the only punishment it entailed upon Alvaro.

Among the beauties which graced the court of Leon, none was so distinguished for mental and personal accomplishments as the youthful daughter of Ferdinand de Hara. Scarce had the eyes of the haughty Alvaro fallen on her, ere love took possession of his heart.

Ferdinand, too generous to be implacable in his resentment, rejected not the overtures he made for a reconciliation with him, in consequence of the passion he had conceived for his daughter, and thus afforded him the requisite opportunities for cultivating

her good graces ; in his efforts for which his united attractions soon rendered him successful.

Though past the meridian of life, he still retained a commanding stature, an expressive and highly animated countenance ; added to which, were manners of the most captivating description.

But judging, in a great measure, of Ferdinand by himself, he much feared, notwithstanding the partiality with which he saw he had inspired the beauteous Amelrosa, his suit would ultimately prove unfortunate, if not seconded by her uncle, the king ; he accordingly solicited his interference, and obtained it ; the king, from selfish motives, wishing to do every thing calculated to attach so powerful a chief to his interest, as, from the numerous partizans he still retained in Castile, he considered Alvaro to be.

Ferdinand, although, as already remarked, too noble to voluntarily cherish the memory of injuries, still could not so completely overcome his dislike to the house of De Lara, as to relish the thoughts of an alliance with it. The interference of the king, however, brought him to consent that his daughter's marriage with Alvaro should take place at the expiration of a year, provided, in that period, nothing occurred in the conduct of her lover, to induce a belief of his being unworthy of her hand.

It was during this probationary year, the invasion of Castile was planned by the restless and revengeful Alvaro.

For the disappointment of this enterprise, he looked to Amelrosa for consolation ; but on demanding her hand from her father, who, in consequence of the disapprobation he had expressed at the attack on Castile, had been informed his presence at court would be dispensed with, it was peremptorily refused him.

" Recollect," said Ferdinand, with solemn severity, in whose noble mind a sense of injuries had not bee

able to extinguish the spirit of patriotism, "the conditions on which I promised you my daughter."

"I do," replied Alvaro, haughtily; "but cannot call to mind any action that renders me unworthy of her."

"Then your memory must be as treacherous as your heart," returned Ferdinand, scornfully; "but though *you* may forget, the world will remember Alvaro's being a traitor."

"A traitor!" repeated Alvaro, starting back, while from his eye-balls flashed the living fire.

"Yes! what other appellation does he merit who seeks the destruction of his native country? But I wish not to enter on the task of admonition. From this moment all intercourse ceases between us, for never will I hold converse with a man whose principles I contemn."

The rage which fired the haughty and vindictive soul of Alvaro at this conduct, may easily be conceived; nor could aught but his unwillingness to betray how severely he felt the disappointment of his hopes respecting the fair Amelrosa, have withheld him from yielding to it.

Burning for revenge, yet, from the above cause, averse to seek it openly, he made use of the influence he had acquired over the king, to poison his mind against Don Ferdinand, and procure his banishment to a considerable distance from court.

Ferdinand was at no loss to account for the alteration in the conduct of his royal protector; he clearly perceived it was owing to the machinations of Alvaro: but though he felt all the indignation which a sense of injury begets, he disdained to use any expostulation on the subject; and quietly withdrawing from the scenes where he had so long acted a distinguished part, sought in rural retirement, and domestic happiness, a balm for the wounds inflicted by ingratitude and injustice.

Alvaro was not of a nature to remain long inactive ; besides, in the present instance, his natural violence was heightened by the pangs of disappointment ; and he rested not till he had again worked upon the king of Leon to take up arms against his son.

This second attempt to dispossess him of his dominions, proved as unsuccessful as the first—again the unnatural father was obliged to humble himself before his son, by acknowledging himself in error : his penitence, however, would probably have been as short-lived as that he had before evinced, but for the death of Alvaro.

While ravaging his native country, at the head of a martial train of adherents, and audaciously defying the authority of his sovereign, the signal of retreat was given ; he obeyed it with reluctance and indignation. The prospect of disgrace, the disappointment of his revenge, were too much for him ; and, in a paroxysm of rage and despair, he freed, with his own hand, the king of Leon from an injurious counsellor, and the sovereign of Castile from an implacable foe.

The generosity of the latter was conspicuous on this occasion ; he warred not with the dead ; and by the magnificence with which he celebrated the obsequies of Alvaro, evinced his forgiveness of the repeated injuries he had done him.

He who can forgive injuries is never unmindful of benefits : he had heard of the unshaken loyalty of Ferdinand de Hara ; and proved his grateful sense of it by inviting him to return to Castile, and restoring his long forfeited honours and possessions.

Death prevented Ferdinand from accepting this invitation ; but his young kinsman, Lopez de Hara and to whom his daughter, the accomplished Amelrosa, had given her hand, soon after the rejection of Alvaro, availed himself of it.

The grateful nature of Ferdinand rendered him prodigal of his kindness to him ; the first offices and honours in the state were lavished on him ; to the title of count, he united the important trusts of high treasurer and prime minister ; and committed the troops and government of Andalusia to his brother.

But he had soon reason to repent this conduct : Don Lopez, the most arrogant of mankind, far from ascribing these distinctions to the true cause, imputed them solely to his own merits ; and on every occasion acted with the haughtiness of a man merely receiving what he had a right to.

Distrust, in consequence, succeeded to confidence in the mind of the king ; he became disgusted by such pride and ingratitude ; and, as a means of humbling one, and punishing the other, recalled from exile, and admitted to his councils, the namesake and successor of that haughty chief, Don Alvaro de Lara, who had so often offended against him.

As he imagined, the pride of the minister was wounded by the promotion of the hereditary enemy of his house ; but, contrary to his expectations, instead of humbling him to greater submission, it only served to render him more overbearing.

Instead of endeavouring to conciliate his prince by submission, though, in the elevation of his foe, he might have perceived the tottering situation he stood in, he did every thing to exasperate him, insolently demanding the dismissal of Alvaro, and, on being refused, flying to arms to enforce the measure.

The numerous vassals of the house of Hara readily obeyed the summons of their chief, and again the kingdom became agitated by contending factions.

At length Ferdinand, inclined to pacific measures, condescended to invite the offending chief to a conference. This condescension, however, could obtain no concession from him : he insisted on the dismissal

of Alvaro, as a preliminary measure to his laying down his arms ; and in reply to the king, that he should evacuate the fortresses he had seized, or corrupted, answered by the expressive menace of laying his hand to his sword.

This insolence was the signal of his death—instantly a hundred nobles, among whom was Don Alvaro, jealous of the dignity of their sovereign, started from their seats, and plunged their swords into his bosom.

More enraged than intimidated by this event, his adherents rallied in Andalusia ; which, by the artifices of his brother, Diego, had been excited to revolt.

They did not long, however, triumph with impunity. Ferdinand was too vigorous in his measures, to permit them for any time to brave his authority ; and, discomfited and despairing, they were compelled to take refuge in different courts, to elude his vengeance.

From that period till toward the reign of Sancho the Fourth, they remained in exile, when, through various intercessions, they were recalled from it, and again restored to their original honours and estates.

The last concern of Sancho, justly surnamed the Brave, and who, in the flower of his days, was cut off by a lingering disease, was to provide for the tranquil succession of his son, Ferdinand, whose tender age exposed him to the factions which had so long agitated the kingdom ; accordingly, in the presence of the most illustrious dignitaries of the church and state, he nominated his consort, Maria, sole regent, a distinction to which her virtues fully entitled her.

But scarce were the last honors paid to his remains, ere Don Henry de Hara opposed this nomination ; and, backed by a turbulent nobility, who thought with reluctance of submitting to the government of a woman, quickly succeeded in wresting the title from her.

The dignity he had so unjustly possessed himself of, he was not long suffered to enjoy with impunity : the house of Lara, which had also eagerly aspired to it, disgusted, as well as disappointed, by the preference shown to him, their hereditary enemy, on this occasion, fomented numerous plots to deprive him of it, which, though not immediately successful, kept the kingdom in a state of perpetual agitation.

At length they succeeded in undermining his authority, by poisoning the mind of the king against him, as he advanced towards manhood ; nor rested till they had spirited him up to resolve on assuming the reins of government himself—a resolution in which he was supported by the multitude, ever prone to change.

The irritation of the house of Hara would have led them to revolt, had they beheld any certain prospect of crushing the detested house of Lara by such a measure : but, surrounded as it was by partizans as numerous as their own, and favoured besides by the king, they saw no likelihood, at this juncture, of striking an effectual blow against it ; and therefore determined, for the present, to defer their meditated revenge.

An opportunity soon occurred for the accomplishment of this : some disturbances, on the side of Navarre, they had the address to persuade the king, originated in the intrigues of the family of Lara : accordingly, in a transport of rage and indignation, he ordered two chiefs of that illustrious house to be thrown from a rock in the kingdom of Jaen—an order which was executed with such promptitude, as left the unhappy noblemen only time to summon him to appear in the presence of God within a month from that period ; and, strange to relate, he died ex-

actly at the time mentioned; and thus acquired the surname of Ferdinand the Summoned.

In the succeeding reign, this conduct met with a severe retaliation: a prince of the blood royal had married a daughter of the king of Arragon, and aspired himself to the throne. The house of Lara secretly affected to favour his views, and through their machinations, enabled him to succeed in corrupting the allegiance of the house of Hara. This point accomplished, and the indignation of their sovereign excited against them, they forsook Emanuel, and solicited and obtained the pardon of Alphonzo: who, from besieging Gibraltar, then in possession of the Moors, was recalled by the intelligence of Don Emanuel and the house of Hara being in arms.

The irritated king flew to chastise the insurgents—he was not long in dispersing them. Don Emanuel fell into his hands; and Don Alonzo de Hara fled to his fortress, in the mountainous region of Biscay: but ere long he was surprised in it; and, after being reproached by the king for his ingratitude, publicly beheaded.

The justice of his doom could not be disputed, but its severity filled all with terror. The nobles of Castile could not hear without dread, that the chief of the illustrious house of Hara had fallen by the hand of a common executioner.

The resentment of the king, appeased by his death, his family, were restored to his confiscated honours and estates; nor by any succeeding act gave occasion to have their loyalty again suspected; neither did their ancient enemies, the house of Lara: still, however, both retained their hereditary prejudices, till the time of the marquis of Almeria, who, more liberal than his predecessors, exerted himself to overcome them, but in vain—his overtures for a recon-

ciliation between their houses were haughtily repulsed, though he neglected no opportunity of endeavouring to conciliate the regard of the duke of Osma, by evincing, on every occasion, the admiration and esteem in which he held his talents.

CHAP. IV.

He saw her charming, but he saw not half
The charms her downcast modesty concealed ;
That very moment, love and chaste desire
Sprung in his bosom.

THOMSON.

YET for retaining these prejudices, none, perhaps, had greater cause than the marquis Almeria, in consequence of the conduct of the duke of Osma, while yet a very young man : the duke, in pursuing the pleasures of the chace, amidst the mountains of Bis-
cay, met with an accident, which obliged his attendants to convey him to the nearest habitation they could find ; this happened to be the castle of the marquis, a circumstance that would undoubtedly have prevented his entering it, but that at the moment of arriving at it, the pain of his bruises had reduced him to a state of insensibility.

Nothing could exceed the kindness he experienced ; his heart, however, remained unaffected by it, and in secret he reproached his attendants for having brought him thither : politeness, however, obliged him to conceal his dissatisfaction at the circumstance ; and, in pursuance of its dictates, he did not refuse remaining some little time after his recovery beneath the roof of the marquis.

This period introduced to his knowledge a young kinswoman of the marchioness's, the Lady Octavia de Larma, heiress to a considerable estate, to which several particular privileges and honours were annexed.

In default of issue, the Marchioness Almeria was her next heir; and about an estate of this description, he could not persuade himself the marquis was indifferent.

This idea, strengthened by the disinclination she showed to company, owing to grief for the recent death of her father, but which he ascribed to the artifices of the marquis, first made him conceive the project of endeavouring to gain her hand, though, but for it, she, probably, was one of the last women he would have thought of selecting for his bride, not because she wanted personal attractions, but on account of her connexion with a family he detested, to which, like Hannibal to the Romans, he had almost been sworn to maintain eternal hatred. Formed to please, whenever it was his wish to do so, he soon succeeded in gaining her affections; but no sooner were their nuptials solemnized, than he hurried her from the castle of the marquis; nor from that moment permitted the least degree of intimacy between their families, conduct which so highly irritated and severely wounded her feelings, as by degrees to lead to the greatest unhappiness.

She did not survive the birth of her daughter; and at her death, the duke evinced feelings which, in consequence of his previous conduct, drew upon him the imputation of hypocrisy; when, however, it was seen that he had no idea of making another choice, greater credit was given to him for sincerity.

The marquis had hoped this connexion would have brought about a reconciliation between their houses; and his regret at the disappointment of this hope was heightened by the passion his son had conceived for the beauteous Elvina.

At a tournament at the castle of her father, he first beheld the lovely maid, and from her hand received the prize adjudged to his matchless valour

and skill, but without revealing himself : he could not, without a humiliating sensation, knowledge having entered the forbidden walls of Osma. The fame of her charms was his sole inducement for entering them ; and, his curiosity gratified, he withdrew with the same privacy he had entered, without its being once surmised who the companion of the day was.

But in a very different state of mind to that in which he had entered, he withdrew—love, with all its train of disquietudes, had taken possession of his soul. The charms of Elvina surpassed the idea he had formed of them ; his sighing heart acknowledged her the most beautiful of created beings ; and, in acknowledging her so, became her captive : but, alas ! hope, the lover's staff, was denied him ; and, when too late, he almost repented having exposed himself to the influence of charms so calculated to inspire a passion not likely to be rewarded.

After many internal struggles, he opened his heart to his father, conjuring him to make immediate proposals to the duke of Osma for the hand of his lovely daughter.

The marquis heard him with regret, not because he disapproved his passion, but because he feared it would be hopeless.

" But so much have I your happiness at heart, my dear son," replied this indulgent father, " so ardently do I wish to do every thing that has a tendency to promote it, that, provided you satisfy me your addresses would not be unacceptable to the young lady herself, I shall make every effort, consistent with pride and dignity, to try and prevail on the duke to sanction them ; but, except you do this, I cannot interfere on the subject, since it would mortify me much, after combating with his prejudices, to find my time and pains thrown away, by your being refused by her."

Don Ferdinand could not oppose the determination of his father; but how was he to obtain him the assurance he required, denied as he was all access to his mistress? While vainly revolving different plans for gaining admittance to her, hostilities broke out between the respective courts of Spain and Portugal: and he, with the rest of the troops proceeding the frontiers, found, when he least expected it, means of accomplishing this wish.

He had made the tour of the different courts of Europe; at the French one he contracted an intimacy, which soon ripened into friendship, with Sir Eustace St. Valery.

On his being taken prisoner by the duke, he immediately offered to ransom him; his offer, however, was haughtily rejected: through the kindness, however, of the squire, to whose care he was committed, he was allowed to see him, a kindness excited by a sense of gratitude, Sir Eustace having saved his life, by interposing between him and a Gascon soldier, who, taking advantage of his having stumbled on the field, was on the point of stabbing him.

To the sympathizing bosom of his friend, Sir Eustace scrupled not to mention the injury he feared he should sustain, in consequence of the unprincipled disposition of his brother, by not being allowed to take immediate possession of the property which had lately devolved to him.

Don Ferdinand, after musing some time on the subject, proposed his endeavouring to prevail on the squire to let him repair to Gascony for the purpose, and accept him as a hostage for his return.

St. Valery followed his advice, though with little hopes of succeeding. Contrary to his expectations, however, he obtained, though not without some difficulty, the desired boon; the squire wishing to ma-

nifest the sense he entertained of the obligation he had conferred on him, and, reflecting, besides, from having such a hostage as don Ferdinand in his hands, and the improbability there was of the duke's desiring to see him, that he ran but little risk in complying with his request.

Accordingly, at the last stage, they exchanged clothes; and while sir Eustace journeyed to France, don Ferdinand took the place he would have occupied in one of the deserted towers of the castle.

But, warm as was his friendship for sir Eustace, it must be acknowledged it was not his sole inducement for becoming his hostage, at the very moment the idea suggested itself to him—he had in view the opportunity which such a measure might afford him, of gaining access to his lovely mistress.

His hopes were not disappointed: he had not been many days a prisoner, when he discovered a secret door, which gave him free egress from the tower; he had previously made himself acquainted with the part of the building in which the apartments occupied by lady Elvina were situated, and adopted the method already mentioned for introducing himself to her notice.

At the first interview, the repugnance he felt to any thing like deceit or dissimulation, would have occasioned his revealing himself; but that he feared, if unhappily imbued with the prejudices of her father, he might, by immediately disclosing himself, be prevented from any further opportunity of cultivating her regard.

He therefore, in consequence of this apprehension, resolved on trying to create an interest for himself in her bosom, ere he revealed himself, trusting, if successful in obtaining her regard, the voice of prejudice would vainly plead against him.

A short time gave him reason to hope he was not indifferent to her ; still, still, however, he hesitated to disclose himself, still wished to render assurance doubly sure, ere he hazarded the discovery.

At length the return of St. Valery, in despair at not being able to prevail on his brother to give up his prisoner, by obliging him to quit the tower, reduced him to the necessity of no longer delaying it.

But at the very moment the secret trembled on his lips, the approach of the duke prevented its utterance ; and being unable to surmise when he should have another opportunity of conversing with his lovely mistress, he the next evening despatched a letter to her, under cover to Olivia, candidly confessing the deception he had practised on her, and avowing the marquis's intention of immediately soliciting her hand for him.

This letter, however, never reached her—through some accident, the page to whom it was entrusted lost it ; and, fearful, from the strict and repeated admonitions he had received to be careful of it, to acknowledge his carelessness, positively asserted having delivered it ; and, after waiting a considerable time for an answer, being informed there was none.

Don Ferdinand knew not what to think of this message ; his heart began to misgive him ; determined, however, not long to endure the agonies of suspense, he concealed his fears from the marquis, and urged his immediate overtures to the duke : the result of his application to him filled him with despair.

The duke, in order to ascertain whether his daughter had given any secret encouragement to the addressee of don Ferdinand, artfully pretended to her, on receiving the overtures of the marquis, that she was fully at liberty to receive them or not ; and, on being assured by her, that nothing could have been more distressing to her than to have been compelled to accept

them, urged her unwillingness to the alliance as an excuse for his own reluctance to it, unwilling, at times, to let the extent of his prejudices be known.

Rage, as well as despair, filled the heart of Ferdinand, on finding his suit still more firmly rejected by her, as he was led to believe, than by her father; he could no longer believe she had really loved him; or, if he did, he conceived the affections of a heart that could sacrifice its regard to prejudice, not worth retaining.

Indignation determined him on tearing her image from his heart; yet, notwithstanding this determination, he continued to frequent the vicinity of her abode, making, however, the chace, his pretext for doing so, since, even to himself, he blushed to acknowledge the feelings that propelled him thither.

Returning from it one evening, he passed nearer than usual to the castle, and unexpectedly beheld her in one of the balconies. She instantly recognised him; and, for a moment, their mutual emotions suspended the faculties of both: then a little recovering himself, he rode onward, leaving her overwhelmed with surprise and confusion.

A young lady was at the moment with her, and who, as almost discrediting their testimony, her eyes eagerly pursued the receding form of her lover, carelessly inquired of her, whether she had ever before seen that young cavalier?

"Yes," in faltering accents, and with a cheek crimsoned with a conscious blush, Elvina replied, she had.

"So have I too," added her friend; "he was at the grand tournament that was held the other day at Seville, and bore away the prize from every competitor."

"At the last tournament!" involuntarily repeated *Elvina*, starting from her leaning attitude over the edge of the balcony, to look in her face.

"Yes, she rejoined; but I could not learn who he was: being but just introduced into life, I as yet scarcely know any of the courtiers; and, unfortunately, those of whom I inquired his name were almost as new to the place as myself."

Elvina had no power to converse further with her; making a pretext for leading her from the spot, she left her to Olivia; and withdrew to her own chamber, to give vent in secret to the feelings that oppressed her.

"Was he then false? was he then perfidious? oh! yes, she could not entertain a doubt on the subject; his return to Seville, at the very time at which she imagined him at a long, long distance from her, endeavouring to overcome the obstacles that impeded their union, and the manner in which he had there been engaged, was to her an unquestionable proof of his baseness—of his being one of the most deceitful of mankind—of his having gained her affections, but to triumph in the weakness that bestowed them, and again approached her residence, but to wound still more severely the feelings he had previously imposed upon."

The emotion she had betrayed at seeing him, had in a degree, revived the desponding hopes of don Ferdinand; almost convinced from it, he was not entirely indifferent to her, and from this conviction, led to flatter himself, that, if an opportunity occurred for again pleading his passion in person, he might, perhaps, be able to prevail on her to lend a propitious ear to it, he determined, contrary to his previous resolutions, on immediately seeking one.

Accordingly detaching himself from his party, and resigning his horse to an attendant, he hastened to the cell of father Anselm, his relative, and the confidant of his passion for the beauteous daughter of Osma; and communicating to him the recent circumstance, was by him provided with the disguise

of a monk, in order to prevent any risk of discovery in watching for the opportunity he sought.

Several days elapsed ere he obtained it; and when at length, he learned, in consequence of the explanation it led to, that to her being still ignorant of his real name might be imputed her rejection of his addresses, to paint his feelings were impossible.

But the transport occasioned by this reflection was quickly damped, by her acknowledging herself not uninfluenced by the prejudices of the duke, and the unworthy motive to which, owing to these prejudices, she ascribed the overture of the marquis for an alliance between their houses. His proud, his noble spirit revolted from the idea of any longer soliciting her hand under a borrowed name; yet, notwithstanding his disdain of deception, he now trembled to avow himself, lest the avowal might prove fatal to the final accomplishment of his wishes.

After some deliberation, therefore, he resolved on remaining silent on the subject, till another effort had been made to surmount the prejudices of the duke; when, should they be found invincible, he decided on an appeal to her tenderness and generosity: yet, when he reflected that in vain he might make it, in bitterness of soul, he execrated the vindictive tempers that had nourished the feuds which gave him so much cause for apprehension: "Fatal, fatal enmity," he involuntarily sighed to himself, as the idea obtruded on his mind, "why, why have the sons been encouraged to feed the flame which the animosities of the fathers kindled? why not instructed, that to forgive is nobler than to revenge?"

Afraid to question her on the subject of the letter, lest his inquiries should betray him into some premature discovery, he restrained himself till his return home, when he quickly extorted the truth from the *terrified page*.

CHAP. V.

Oh love, how are thy precious, sweetest minutes,
Thus ever crossed, thus vexed with disappointments !

SOON as with gentle sighs the evening breeze began to whisper through the murmuring woods, Elvina, with her faithful Olivia, repaired to a temple upon the edge of a beautiful lake in the garden, where she had appointed to meet her lover, and to which he had the power of admitting himself, by being put in possession of the key of a private door.

But scarcely had she entered this delightful retreat, ere, to her inexpressible consternation, she was joined by the duke, who, having just arrived from Seville, and learned the direction she took, had followed her, for the purpose of enjoying in her company the reviving coolness of the evening hour, and the innumerable beauties of this enchanting spot.

She was utterly at a loss how to act: to attempt apprising her lover of the circumstance was impossible she knew, without running the risk of incurring his immediate suspicions; yet she trembled to think of the consequences that might result from his being discovered by him. Her only hope in this dilemma was, that the sound of his voice might reach the ear of the supposed St. Valery, time enough to prevent his appearance.

But, instead of encouraging the conversation which she sought to promote for this purpose, though in an agitation that almost took from her the power of utterance, the duke desired her to take up her guitar.

She durst not disobey him ; but scarce had her trembling hand touched the chords, when, as if this had been a preconcerted signal, Don Ferdinand rushed into the building—but catching a glimpse of the duke, started back with a quickness that prevented his features being seen.

Elvina, letting fall the instrument, uttered an involuntary scream, and instinctively caught hold of the no less alarmed Olivia ; while the duke, drawing his sword, rushed after the intruder, in a transport of rage and indignation. Don Ferdinand, however, succeeded in eluding his pursuit ; and, still more exasperated from this circumstance, he returned to the temple, fury flashing from his eyes, and his frame trembling from the violence of his emotions.

Elvina wished to throw herself on his mercy ; but the dreadful expression of his countenance—the vengeance he denounced against her for her conduct—the manner in which he demanded the name of her paramour, as he denominated Don Ferdinand, overpowered her utterance ; and though she threw herself, with a deprecating look, at his feet, she was unable to articulate a word.

Olivia, perceiving her inability to speak, and dreading some fatal consequences, should he remain much longer unanswered, now ventured to interpose, conjuring him to let lady Elvina retire, and receive from her the explanation he required. After a momentary hesitation, he consented : the trembling maid accordingly withdrew to an upper apartment, while Olivia proceeded to answer his interrogatories.

She attempted not the slightest prevarication ; her soul disdained falsehood ; and, besides, she knew she was before a person too keen to be easily deceived, and who would never forgive the slightest attempt at deception.

As the duke listened to her, his fury gradually subsided : his opinion of parental authority was too great, his temper too despotic, not still to make him feel highly exasperated with his daughter, for daring to give encouragement to addresses unsanctioned by his approbation ; yet still the reflection that she might have bestowed her affections on an object infinitely less deserving of her, materially lessened the resentment the circumstance had excited.

From the urgent manner in which the marquis Almeria had solicited his alliance—the admiration, the adoration, in which, from universal report, he understood Don Ferdinand held his daughter, he was not without apprehension, that, in some way or other, he had introduced himself to her notice, and that he was the person who had rushed into the temple.

The relief experienced by the removal of this apprehension, tended not a little to allay the ferment excited by the discovery of her attachment. Besides, he held both the merits and accomplishments of Sir Eustice in high estimation ; and when he reflected on the rich inheritance which had lately devolved to him, and the almost certain prospect there was of his immediate succession to the entire honours and estates of his illustrious family, a long course of intemperance having reduced his brother to the very brink of the grave, he could not retain that displeasure at her conduct he might otherwise have done.

The gradual relaxation of his features announced to Olivia the alteration in his feelings, a circumstance of which she took advantage to plead the cause of her beloved charge, with all the zeal of friendship and fidelity ; and at length succeeded in drawing a promise from the duke of taking the affair into consideration, a promise that inspired her with the most sanguine hopes of a happy issue to it. He positively, however, refused seeing his daughter again that night, his mind

being too much occupied, at the moment, by another affair of consequence, to allow of his discussing for the present any subject foreign to it.

The ensuing day was the one appointed by the king for declaring a governor to the young prince, his son by his late deceased queen, Jane of Navarre, and for which high distinction, one of the greatest he could confer, the duke was an applicant; and though he thought it scarcely possible the king could refuse this honour to him, confessedly one of the most illustrious of his subjects; unrivalled yet in council or the field, still he was in a sufficient degree of anxiety on the subject to feel agitated.

He commanded Olivia to attend his daughter immediately back to the castle. In their way thither, the idea that he might, perhaps, be following close upon their steps, kept both silent; but the moment she gained her apartment, lady Elvina eagerly, though tremblingly, inquired of Olivia, what had passed between them, conjuring her, as a friend sincere, not to disguise the truth, but let her have his very words.

"Yes, because to hear them can occasion no pain," replied Olivia, with that lively joy which the idea of affording pleasure to another never fails of giving the feeling mind. The charming sounds, still undulating, seem—" You ~~love~~ not the accomplished St. Valery more, I am convinced, than he esteems him; in short, if aright I read the secrets of his soul, your fondest wishes are likely to succeed."

Elvina gazed at her for a moment, as if incredulous; then clasping her hands together, while her bright eyes flashed with joy, and its rich suffusion mantled her cheek, "Ah! my Olivia," she exclaimed, "you've made my anxious heart rejoice: tell me, tell me what inclines you to imagine my choice approved by my father? The repetition is music to my ear. Oh! say, will e'er, indeed, that wished-for sun appear,

whose joyous beams shall to the world disclose the sweet completion of our mutual flame ? Are you certain he gave you reason for the opinion you have avowed ? Are you certain you gave him no cause to imagine love more powerful in my mind than duty ?”

“ No—without his sanction, I assured him no vow would ever be irrecoverably plighted by you—that the remotest idea of forming a clandestine union had never entered your mind. This assurance produced an immediate alteration in his looks, and drew from him an acknowledgment of the merits of him you love —yes, he confessed him worthy of you, descended as he is from a brave, faithful line—young, yet with virtue sparkling in his eyes, as conscious of the blood from whence he sprung ; and from this confession, judge whether he is not inclined to favour his addresses : think you he would have said what must render your attachment justifiable in your own eyes, had he not meant to encourage it ?”

“ It seems, indeed, improbable he should,” returned Elvina ; “ yet still my troubled soul admits no rest, rejects this joy, and feels itself distressed. Fortune each moment shows a different face—though now she smiles, I dread impending woes.”

“ Your reason,” said Olivia, should prevent such idle fears.”

“ I grant it,” replied the lovely maid, “ and will exert myself to combat them : but, my Olivia, after a storm, it is long ere the waves subside into calmness ; so, after any violent emotion, some time must elapse ere the mind can regain its wonted composure.”

Restless, agitated, apprehensive—Don Ferdinand could not think of quitting the vicinity of the castle, without making an effort to learn what had resulted from his being seen by the duke. From the precipitation with which he had retreated, he was in hopes

he had not discovered who he was ; but he was not certain ; and this, united to his fears of what lady Elvina might have suffered from the well-known violence of the duke, tormented him with anxiety.

After remaining some time within the covert of the woods, he again ventured to approach the building, in hopes of finding, if not his mistress there, at least their mutual friend, Olivia ; but he was disappointed—he found it silent and deserted ; he could not, however, bring himself immediately to quit it ; he still continued to linger on the steps, as if hoping something would occur to relieve his disquietude.

The agitation of his mind was forcibly contrasted by the tranquillity of the scene without—a solemn gloom had by this time overspread the face of nature ; the fairy vallies, the brilliant prospects, that had charmed his eye by day, were now all hid in shadow ; while, in place of the music of the woods, nought was heard but the melancholy rippling of the water near the banks, and the low rustling of the trees that crowned their undulating summits with all the pomp of foliage.

From a pensive reverie he was suddenly roused by the approach of a man from the edge of the lake. The caution with which he trod, united to the disguise of a long cloak, convinced Don Ferdinand, whoever he was, he was upon some clandestine enterprise ; and this conviction induced him to step behind one of the pillars of the colonade that surrounded the temple, in order to watch his motions.

As he passed, the twilight enabled him to distinguish his features ; and he recognised in them those of a young knight, named Sir Rodolph de Bearn, the beauty of whose person, and brilliancy of whose accomplishments, had long rendered him an object of admiration in the Castilian court, and who, it was confidently reported, had proposed for lady Elvina ; but

being peremptorily rejected by the duke, on account of the disparity of his fortune, but still more the obscurity of his birth, his origin being utterly unknown, and the duke himself being the first, if not the only, patron of his fortune.

Don Ferdinand experienced an uneasy sensation at seeing him ; yet a sensation which he reproached himself for feeling, assured as he was, by a variety of circumstances, of the truth and affection of his beauteous mistress : but certain recollections reurred at the moment, to render him disturbed at the circumstance.

While a voluntary prisoner in the castle, as he was lingering one night in the self-same spot, for the purpose of retracing in imagination the delightful minutes he had passed there with the beautiful Elvina, Don Rodolph suddenly rushed by him ; and ere he had recovered from the surprise the circumstance gave him, he heard the voice of lady Elvina in distress ; he directly flew towards the spot, but checked his steps within a few paces of it, in consequence of hearing the duke with her.

With feelings easier to be conceived than described, he heard him accuse her of carrying on a clandestine correspondence with Don Rodolph, and giving secret encouragement to his interdicted addresses. She protested her innocence ; but the protestation had little effect upon the anxious feelings of her lover, in consequence of her being hurried from the spot, ere she had time to explain the circumstances which should prove it.

That night was one of torture to Don Ferdinand—the yellow-tinging plague had infected every feeling ; and till he had an opportunity of coming to an explanation with her, all thoughts of rest forsook him.

This was not long denied him—they met the next evening ; and immediately revealing what he had

chanced to overhear the preceding night, he conjured her to relieve him from the torture it had inflicted.

She did not allow him to supplicate in vain—she had too much feeling to trifle with the anxiety of a heart like his, too much delicacy not to be distressed at the idea of a suspicion being entertained of her truth.

The candour of her explanation dissipated in a moment all the phantoms of jealousy; yet the pleasures of reviving confidence were not unalloyed, since Don Ferdinand could not help inveighing against himself, for ever having doubted her constancy.

She was reading the preceding night, she said, in her chamber, when, just as the midnight hour struck, the door slowly opened, and a man, wrapped up in a large cloak, appeared at it, beckoning her from the room.

For a moment, she continued, she lost the power of motion or utterance; then starting from her seat, was on the point of alarming her attendants, whom she had some time before dismissed to rest, when it suddenly struck her that the duke, perhaps, was taken ill, and this a messenger sent to summon her to him.

Checking herself, therefore, in consequence of this idea, she demanded whether this was the case or not; and being led to believe, from an inclination of his head, it was, snatched up a taper, and desired him to lead on, and she would follow.

He accordingly obeyed, proceeding through a long range of galleries and apartments, till they came to a remote hall, leading to the duke's study, and where she knew he was often in the habit of passing a considerable portion of the night, revolving matters connected with the high offices he held in the state; but instead of approaching the door of this apartment, the supposed attendant advanced towards one at some

distance from it, opening immediately into the garden, still inviting her by his gestures to follow him. Involuntarily, however, she now shrunk back, determined on proceeding no further, till she had learned whither he would lead her, and to whom.

Finding she paused, he turned round; and suddenly letting fall the cloak which had hitherto concealed his features from view, disclosed to her the spectral likeness of the portrait of her deceased grand-sire, the father of her mother.

Overpowered by the shock, she dropped, fainting, on the ground; and on recovering, found herself still extended there, and without any other light than what the windows admitted, her taper being extinguished in her fall.

Without venturing to cast a glance around her, lest the dim twilight should disclose to her view the object of her terror, she began to reascend the stairs; and having traversed the lonely galleries and apartments she had to pass through in her way to her chamber, was within a few paces of it, when again she beheld him at her elbow; her senses again forsook her; and when again reviving, she perceived the day was breaking.

Cheered by its returning light, she was soon able to collect herself, and rejoice that she had not alarmed the castle—aware of what had happened being calculated to excite either anger or derision in the mind of the duke, and consternation among the domestics.

Her confidant, Olivia, was at this juncture absent on a visit to a sick friend; and unwilling, from the above consideration, to mention it to any other person in the castle, yet unable, from the awful impression it had made on her feelings, to conceal it altogether, she at length came to the resolution of revealing it to father Anselm.

Accordingly, in the course of the morning, she despatched a billet to him, by one of the pages, requesting to see him at a certain hour in the evening, in the gallery leading to the oratory.

He came at the time appointed; and on hearing her strange relation, promised, as soon as the castle should be at rest, to repair to her, for the purpose of watching with her, and consulting on the measures to be pursued for trying to discover whether any imposition had been attempted to be practised on her.

Accordingly, at the expected time, she heard again the knock at the door of her dressing-room; and opening it, perceived, as she imagined, father Anselm muffled up in his cowl; but instead of advancing, as she motioned him, he informed her, in an under tone, that he had been commanded, by a voice which he durst not disobey, to conduct her immediately to a particular spot in the garden.

Her awe and astonishment at this assertion were too great to allow of her asking any questions; and in silence she suffered herself to be led from her apartment.

They passed into the garden through the door to which she had been so mysteriously led the preceding night; but had not advanced many paces from it, when her agitation heightened to an overpowering degree, by the evident agitation of her companion, who, in order to support her tottering steps, had taken her hand; she suddenly paused, and declared her inability of proceeding further, let the consequences of her refusing be what they might.

"Nay, you must come," he cried, in a louder voice than he had before spoken in, and one so different from father Anselm's, that an involuntary shriek escaped her; and wresting her hand from him, she attempted to retreat, but was prevented by his again *catching hold of her.*

In the struggle that ensued, his cowl fell back, and discovered to her the features of Don Rodolph. Her shrieks were now redoubled, and reached the ear of the duke, who, fortunately for her, was sitting up in his library: through a door that opened from it to the garden, he hastened to her rescue; and at his approach Don Rodolph fled.

On making him acquainted with the particulars of the affair, the whole appeared to him a contrivance of Don Rodolph's, for the purpose of carrying her off. Her innocence was no longer doubtful to him; but he chid her for the imprudence she had been guilty of, in suffering herself to be tempted from the castle, at such an hour, by any one.

Father Anselm was sent for, and, in reply to the interrogatories addressed to him, said, that towards the decline of day, a person styling himself a messenger from her, had come to him to say, that particular circumstances had occurred, which put it out of her power to see him that night; from which it was manifest, that Don Rodolph, by some means or other had gained access to the oratory, and overheard their conversation.

That after so daring an attempt, he could think of approaching the castle, except secretly encouraged by some one there, Don Ferdinand could not believe. " Yet why this uneasiness," he added, " at the idea? it cannot be from any person I am interested about he receives it."

This belief, however, could not deter him from following his steps at a distance. On his coming within sight of the castle, he saw a lattice open, in an angle of the building, not far from the chamber occupied by lady Elvina, as if some one had been watching there for him, and a female advance from it into the balcony, covered with a long veil; and who, after conversing with him for some time, but

in a voice too low for him to distinguish her words, withdrew, with a motion for him to retire.

With difficulty, during this scene did Don Ferdinand control his emotions; more than once he was on the point of rushing from his concealment, for the purpose of ascertaining who this female was, but still checked himself, from the reflection of the irreparable injury such a procedure might be the means of doing him, since to discover himself to Don Rodolph could not fail, he was aware, of occasioning an explanation between them, that might be the means of betraying to the object of his adoration what at present he had so many urgent reasons for wishing to conceal from her, and of also inducing her to believe he entertained injurious suspicions of her, suspicions which could not fail of drawing upon him her, perhaps, eternal resentment.

Yet much he wished to know who this female was, in hopes, if he saw her, he should be able to ascertain whether it was on her own account, or for the purpose of aiding him in any other designs he might meditate on the fair heiress, she saw Don Rodolph.

Determined not to lose sight of him till he had seen him from the castle, he tarried in its vicinity till he beheld him quit the garden, and rejoin an attendant in waiting for him, on horseback, at the verge of the forest. His departure restored him to tranquillity, as far as it had been interrupted by the recent circumstance; and the remorse he felt for having suffered it for a moment to inspire him with any thing like a doubt of the truth of his beloved, was accompanied by a resolution henceforth to place the most implicit confidence in her.

But should he ever have an opportunity of evincing this confidence? Oh, yes! he must, he would believe he should—that either the prejudices of the duke would yield to reason, or her scruples to his *passion*.

Yielding to this enchanting hope, he gave way to the most delightful anticipations : he luxuriated in the pleasures of imagination, nor thought of the coming storm ; yet, even at that very moment, clouds were collecting in his horizon, to overshadow all his hopes—“ like the hunter dreaming on the hill of heath, he slept in the mild beams of the sun, but awoke amidst a storm.”

CHAP. VI.

Think you behold him, like a raging lion,
Pacing the earth, and tearing up his steps ;
Fate in his eyes, and roaring with the pain
Of burning fury.

OTWAY.

THE ensuing day, as already mentioned, was the one fixed by the king for nominating a governor to the young prince, his heir, and for which high distinction the marquis Almeria was a competitor, as well as the duke of Osma.

But though the pretensions of these two noblemen to it were secretly acknowledged by the king to be pretty equal, he had no hesitation in deciding in favour of the former, afraid, from the restless spirit and inordinate ambition of the latter, to promote him to a situation calculated to increase his influence in the state.

To paint the rage of the duke at his decision, would be impossible : the bitterness of disappointment was aggravated, not only by the little apprehension he had felt of experiencing it, but by the idea of the person who had been preferred to him.

That his hereditary enemies, the race he detested, the proud house it had ever been his most anxious wish to see humbled, should have obtained a triumph over him, was a reflection of the most galling, the most maddening nature, a draught too bitter for him to swallow.

The triumph of any other person he might have passed over with transient resentment ; but the tri-

h of his “house’s foe” he resolved to revenge, in nner that should make him who had occasioned pent, when too late, his injustice.

In gloomy silence he withdrew from the presence is sovereign; but in passing through another tment of the palace, gave involuntary vent to the est that agitated him, on encountering his now : than ever detested rival, receiving the congratula- ns of a numerous set of the nobility on his apt- ment.

“How sweet,” cried he, stepping and measuring ircle with a haughty and vindictive glance, “to shered into power by the congratulations of the itude! but, amidst the adulations of flattery, lis- o the voice of truth, old man,” turning his scorn- looks upon the marquis, “and know, that the king, aking you governor to Castile’s prince, has rai- you to a rank due but to me.”

I wish to derogate from the merits of no man,” red the marquis, firmly: “no man more es- is the transcendent abilities of the duke of a than I do; no man is readier than I am, to ess him fit for any situation, however arduous or rtant: but whilst I acknowledge this, I trust, at incurring the imputation of vanity, I may add in the present instance, I conceive the judgment ie king cannot be called in question, for this mark onour he has conferred on me.”

Kings,” the haughty duke retorted, “were, like r mortals, liable to err, fallible in their judgment, influenced by prejudice; nor could the dazzling eur of a throne cover their mistakes;” adding, more bitterly, “that the justice and gratitude h high deserts met from him, his conduct to him fully evinced.

he marquis, but in a somewhat agitated tone, cond him to let the subject drop, since it irritated;

allowing that favour might here have possibly had its part, yet at the same time observing, that this respect was due to kings, not to dispute their will, when they have spoken it ; that it became not the subject to animadvert upon the sovereign. Then, after a transient pause, as a means of ending all differences, of proving the sincerity of his professions, his wish to obtain and retain his regard, entreating him to consent to the union of their houses, to let the marriage of their children render their interests the same, and seal them friends forever.

The duke sneeringly replied, in desiring his alliance, he was really too humble, as Don Ferdinand might now, nay, doubtless would, from the pride and vanity with which it was natural to suppose this newly-acquired dignity of his would inflate his heart, form much higher views—a dignity which he trusted the marquis would deserve, as well as enjoy, by teaching his prince how to govern well his kingdom, and make the people tremble at his name ; and to these instructions adding the art of war, fitting him to encounter all its toils and hardships, to pass whole days and nights in heavy arnour, to be the first in danger as in rank, to turn the fate of battles by his sword, and above all, to let him have example, as well as lessons, for his conduct.

The marquis, in a still more agitated tone, his sallow cheek flushed with a momentary suffusion, replied, he was not a man to vaunt of his exploits ; but, thus attacked, he could not forbear saying, that, in spite of envy, the history of his life would teach him these ; that there, in a glorious series of exploits, he would see the paths that led to victory, and raise his fame by imitating him.

Living examples struck more forcibly than any which books could furnish, the duke returned contemptuously ; besides, what mighty feats in arms had

he performed, he demanded, that were not equalled by one day of his? the kingdom, he averred, owed its safety to his arm; his name protected the province of Castile; that they retained their laws, and groaned not under the yoke of the fell enemies, they were to him indebted; each day, each hour, he proudly asserted, added to his glory, his laurels, and his trophies; the prince, under him, would have made his first essay in arms, and learned to conquer by beholding him.

Undoubtedly, the marquis replied, he knew full well his services to the state, since by his side he had often seen him fight and conquer; and since old age had chilled his blood, he well supplied the place he filled; in a word, that he was then what he had been formerly.

And to his merits did he ascribe, the duke insolently demanded, the distinction just conferred upon him? adding, if he did, he must take leave to inform him, he would be singular in the opinion, since, by every one else, it must doubtless be imputed to intrigue.

His actions spoke too highly in his favour to let him need the aid of that, the marquis proudly replied.

"'Tis false," the duke exclaimed, "for had that been the case, the triumph would have been mine, not thine," he cried, "for how poor, how faint the lustre of thy actions, compared to mine!"

Yet not to obtain his suit, rather argued the reverse, rather argued a want of merit—the marquis retorted, unable longer to conceal the disgust he felt at this overweening arrogance.

The Duke repeated the expression in a voice of thunder; his crimsoned cheek for an instant turning pale, then flushing to a deeper red, as, yielding to his fury, he struck the marquis on his face.

The marquis immediately drew; but the agitation of his frame rendered his arm, already enervated by age, impotent to avenge his injured honour—missing

his aim, he was disarmed by his adversary ; and called upon him, in a transport of rage and despair, to take his hated life—hated, since dishonoured.

The duke, after enjoying his anguish for a moment, with a malicious smile, observed his sword was his ; but that a trophy so easily obtained, he disdain'd to retain : “take it therefore,” he added, returning it as he spoke, “nor forget, amongst other matters, informing your prince of the just chastisement your insolence has received. Should you do so, however, believe not that others will be equally remiss, or that hearing it, will fail of making him distinguish between thee and me.”

The surrounding nobles attempted to interfere, but passion had gained too complete an ascendancy over the haughty opponents, to permit them to hearken to the voice of reason ; they precipitately withdrew from the scene of this encounter, to revolve in secret their respective wrongs.

But too painfully convinced, that to redress with his own hand the injury he had met with, was beyond his power, the marquis eagerly inquired for his son, the moment he alighted at his palace ; but he was absent. Anxiety to learn, if possible, whether any thing disagreeable, had resulted from the partial discovery of the preceding night, had carried him to the duke's ; and burning for revenge, the marquis despatched different messengers after him.

In the interim, his heart was a prey to rage, despair, and shame. With bursting tears—tears wrung from him by the agonizing remembrance of past glory, he deplored the failure of that vigour which would once have enabled him so fully to avenge any injury to his honour—deplored his having lived to sustain such infamy—to see in a moment blasted all the laurels he had gathered—to see his arm, which all the kingdom respected, which had so often served his country, and up-

held the tottering throne, betray its cause, and act not for itself. "But not unredressed will go my wrongs," he exclaimed, suddenly starting, and with a sensation of joy; "no, this sword, now, indeed, the vain appendage of my side, shall quickly pass into an abler hand than mine—a hand vigorous as well as willing to avenge them—yes, my Ferdinand will avenge them; his love must yield to resentment; our honour is the same, and both remain disgraced, till this foul stain be washed away. Injuries may be atoned for, and forgiven: but insults admit of no compensation; they degrade the mind in its own esteem, and force it to recover its level by revenge."

Within a few paces of the Almeria palace, Don Ferdinand was met by one of the messengers of the marquis: he hastened to attend him, but not without a secret presentiment of ill, in consequence of knowing the business on which he and the duke of Osma had been to the palace that day.

"Thank heaven, thou art at length returned!" exclaimed the marquis impatiently, the moment he saw him entering the apartment. "Oh! Ferdinand, to a severe trial am I under the necessity of putting your firmness; but a trial," he added, after a transient pause, a pause occasioned by the violence of his emotions, "from which I am confident you will not shrink—no, the blood that swells in thy veins prevents my having a doubt on the subject—my youth revives in thy becoming ardour; yes, my son, thou art at once my hope, my strength, my refuge from despair; delay not then avenging my cause, obliterating my shame."

"What cause, what shame, my sire?" eagerly demanded the agitated youth.

In accents scarce articulate, the marquis informed him. "Yes, oh! live I to acknowledge it!" he cried, "these grey hairs have been disgraced;

but," looking upwards, "these eyes that witnessed the daring wrong, should have beheld the vengeance too, had not the weakness of age rendered unavailing the attempt: but this weapon, which my arm now so ill sustains, will in your hand become the sword of vengeance; with it you will justify your father's cause, and either conquer or die. Not to deceive you, however, you have a foe to deal with, that has never yet been conquered. Yes, though now his mortal enemy, I must still do him justice—these eyes have often been witnesses of his heroic deeds—often seen him, covered with blood and dust, putting whole squadrons to the rout. In short, to put you out of suspense at once, know that it is——"

He stopped for an instant, checked from proceeding by the altering colour of his son.

This pause recalled Don Ferdinand to recollection. "The —" father of Elvina, he would have added, but his quivering lips refused to give utterance to the dreadful assertion.

"Parent of your mistress!" exclaimed the marquis, in an emphatic tone, and fixing his eyes immoveably upon him; "but the dearer the offender, the worse the offence. You hold the sword of vengeance, know the affront received; to urge you on the subject, would be to doubt your feelings, to insult your honour. Farewell, my son," advancing towards the door as he spoke; "overwhelmed with sorrow, I go to lament in solitude the cruel fate that compels me to expose a life incomparably dearer to me than my own."

The suddenness of this mortal blow to all his hopes, suspended for a few minutes the faculties of the agonized Ferdinand; then starting from his motionless posture, "Oh God!" he despairingly exclaimed, "to what a dreadful alternative am I reduced!—an injured father animates my soul to ven-

geance ; a mistress, lost if I pursue it, stays my arm : yet no," he cried, with a sudden burst of passion, " honour is paramount to all other considerations. Yes, my Elvina, best and loveliest of human beings, though dearer to my tortured heart than the life-blood that mantles at it, though in resigning the idea of possessing thee, I relinquish all hope of earthly happiness, yet even for thy dear sake I will not swerve from the line of honour and of duty. I owe my father all before my love ; and whether I fall in the combat, or die of grief, my blood I will render pure as I received it : but already my courage has been remiss ; my vengeance, however, for this momentary delay, shall be but still surer. Yes, my father, thy wrongs shall not remain much longer unatoned ; thy proud adversary, ere long, shall be forced to acknowledge the triumph he gained over thee but delusive."

As he spoke, he rushed from the apartment ; and remounting his courser, was in the act of setting off for the duke's, when a messenger arrived from the king, who, during this interval, had been made acquainted with the affair, to interdict his taking any part in it—his majesty choosing to take the affront to himself, in hopes of preventing, by the measure, a renewal of those hostilities, which had so often disturbed and endangered the state, between the turbulent and vindictive partizans of the respective parties. Should the duke refuse to make an ample apology for the outrage he had committed, he resolved on putting him under an immediate arrest, for the double purpose of proving to his subjects there were none, however exalted their rank, who should dare to offend him with impunity, and appeasing the wounded feelings of the house of Almeria.

Don Ferdinand returned an evasive answer to his messenger ; and the moment he was out of sight,

hastened forward, according to his original intention. He shrunk from the thought of any other than himself wiping out the stain the honour of his house had met with. "No," he cried, as he spurred his horse forward, his generous blood mantling his cheek, "the sword of vengeance has been committed to my hand, nor shall it pass into any other."

In the meanwhile, the king had despatched a young knight of his household, named Don Julio de Miranda, to the duke, for the purpose of acquainting him with his determination. He could not possibly have sent any one more interested in bringing the affair to a happy issue, Don Julio being the intimate friend of the noble Ferdinand, and, consequently, well aware of the service he should render him, by exerting himself to have it amicably settled.

He found no difficulty in being admitted to the presence of the haughty chief, not from any respect for him who sent him, but a kind of curiosity to know the nature of his mission. He did not permit him to remain long in suspense about this, concluding his explanation by an urgent entreaty for the required apology.

"Apologies bespeak repentance," cried the duke, with a supercilious smile; "and as it is unknown to me, I shall not assume the affectation of it."

"Nay, I must believe the contrary," returned Don Julio; "you cannot deny having given the king just cause for offence; and surely a mind noble as yours must repent having hurt so generous a master."

The duke again smiled superciliously; then, with a lowering brow, said, "The king, by his injustice, provoked the offence you speak of; nor shall I, to regain his favour, that favour which my services en-

title me to retain, make any concession unworthy of my honour."

"Can the duke of Osma deny," said Don Julio, with warmth, "that the most illustrious feats subjects can perform, are but their due to kings; that in the most important services they can render them, they but do their duty? and should not, therefore, from them, presume to think they may offend with impunity."

"You speak the courtier," cried the duke, contemptuously; "pity that so much eloquence should be thrown away."

"I have not the vanity to think I can be reckoned eloquent," returned Don Julio, warmly, "but I trust I shall ultimately be found persuasive: you ought, indeed, my Lord—be not offended at the expression—to dread the king's displeasure."

"His displeasure!" repeated the duke, scornfully; "a day cannot ruin one like me. Let him exert his plenitude of power; the state and I shall perish at one blow."

"Yet, though you may not fear, show some respect, at least, for sovereign power."

"Respect!" repeated Osma, contemptuously; "it is I support the sceptre in his hand—ere long the world, as well as John himself, shall know the importance of my friendship to him."

"Oh, arrogance beyond belief! mentally exclaimed Don Julio, at once enraged and astonished at his obduracy; then recollecting his friend, "permit your reason," he resumed, "to allay this heat—be counselled well."

"My mind is already made up on the subject," replied the duke.

"Reflect," rejoined Don Julio, "I must report the substance of this conference to the king: what answer shall I bring?"

"That I will maintain my honour."

"Let me remind you," cried Don Julio, "that kings are absolute."

"Tell him, in honour so are subjects too."

"Oh duke! exclaimed Don Julio, with increasing energy, "let me implore you, by all that is dear and precious to you, not to brave the authority of the king."

"Don Julio," cried the haughty chief, stopping short, as with impatient steps he paced the chamber, "I fully appreciate your motives for this importunity; but as it must be unavailing, the briefer this conference is, the more agreeable to me."

"And do you really persist in setting the displeasure of your sovereign at defiance?"

The unbending Osma answered him by a smile.

"I will no longer then intrude upon you," he added; "but, oh duke! to what a cruel dilemma do you reduce me!—you force me to become instrumental to your ruin. Generous as is the nature of the king, still he is not of a disposition to be braved with impunity; nor would it, indeed, be consistent with his safety that he should. Farewell, my Lord; I leave you with a heavy heart: but ere I retire, permit me to add, that, let the consequences of this unfortunate affair be what they may, there is no service in my power to render him, which the duke of Osma may not at all times freely command."

"And is it already come to this; am I already so denounced, so proscribed, so fallen," cried the duke, in a tone of bitterness, on the withdrawing of Don Julio, "that the insect of an hour shall insult me with an assurance of his friendship! but no matter—I may sink, I may set, for a season, but it will be only like the sun, to rise with renewed splendour!"

But too well aware of the consequences likely to result from his report, it was with difficulty the king

could extort from Don Julio the particulars of what had passed in the conference between him and the duke.

When at length he learned them, “Just heavens!” he exclaimed, “and is it possible he can refuse to make the required concession, persist in braving me, after so rash an act, and with rebellion threaten to crown his insolence! Surely he cannot be so vain, so void of sense, as to suppose such conduct should go unpunished! He first outrageously affronts me in the person of him I had chosen governor for the prince, would fain, in the midst of my palace, give me law, and then defies my authority: but, be he ever so brave, or ever so great, I will find the means to bend his stubborn heart; yes, were he the first of warriors, the very god of war himself, still shall he feel the weight of sovereign power. Let him instantly be taken into custody!” turning to another attendant, “since he has thus abused the gentleness with which I was inclined to treat his offence.”

“Ah, sire!” cried Don Julio, interposing, “suffer me to plead in his behalf—I took him when his passion boiled in every vein; suffer it to subside, and, no doubt, so generous a mind will recollect its duty.”

“Don Julio,” returned the king, “forbear; for know, to plead in such a cause, is criminal.”

“I know obedience is my part; but, oh! my liege, excuse the zeal of friendship; consider, sire, so great a soul, nursed in such generous deeds, but ill can brook to make apologies; had his heart been less, instant submission would have followed your commands. Command aught else beside; his hand, trained in so many wars, to atone for this rash act by feats of arms, and, my life on it, he will more than perform your bidding.”

" You lose respect for me," returned the king ; " yet, at your age, I can excuse this ardour. Know, a prudent king reserves his subjects' blood to be expended for the public weal ; I live but to preserve them, just as the head presides over all the limbs : your arguments, therefore, cannot prevail with me. You speak the soldier, I shall act the king. There is no dishonour in obeying me ; and since the haughty duke dare think the contrary, the vengeance he has provoked he shall feel : I therefore repeat my orders for his immediate apprehension."

While this scene was passing, Don Ferdinand had arrived at the Castle of Osma. His having taken an unfrequented path through the forest, in order to avoid the chance of being overtaken, had prevented his meeting his friend, Don Julio, on his return from it. At some distance he alighted ; and giving his horse in charge to the owner of a solitary hut, which, in his hunting excursions, and other visits to the forest, had more than once sheltered him from an unexpected storm, proceeded onward, through intricate paths, gloomily overshadowed with old trees and thickets, and in many places as impervious to the solar rays as to the faint twilight that now prevailed : their brown horrors suited well his present feelings ; a sudden night had fallen over all his prospects, misery pressed upon him at the moment, and despair closed the perspective.

CHAP. VII.

They fought like two contending winds that strive to roll the wave. Cathan bade his spear to err, for he still thought that his foe was the spouse of Moina.

OSSIAN.

He demanded an audience of the duke, without revealing his name, and was immediately admitted to him.

He concealed his face till he had advanced some way into the room, when, withdrawing his plumed hat, "Know you the marquis Almeria, my Lord?" he demanded of the haughty Osma, to whom he had never been formally introduced, and who, on his approach, had turned from a table, where he had been looking over some papers, to survey him.

To this question the duke replied by a contemptuous smile.

"Behold these eyes!" resumed Don Ferdinand; "see you his generous ardour sparkling in them?"

"What if I should?" replied the duke sneeringly.

"You appear not to recollect me, my Lord; retire a few steps further, and you will then perceive the blood from whence I sprang."

"Presumptuous boy," returned the duke, scornfully; "I perfectly comprehended your meaning."

"True, I am young," rejoined Don Ferdinand; "but it is not length of years that ripens valour in such blood as mine."

"And have you, so new to arms, the vanity to think of coping with me? art thou indeed so arrogant, as to hope to subdue an arm like mine?"

"Think of the blood from whence I am sprung," returned Don Ferdinand, with kindling eyes, "and then doubt, if thou canst, my entertaining such a hope."

"The blood you boast is heated; let it cool, and then you will be sensible of the rashness of your present undertaking."

"No, others might tremble at your name," cried Don Ferdinand, indignantly; "but to me the many laurels that overshad your brows, appear my certain presages of victory. In an injured parent's cause, all is possible; and though unvanquished yet, your arm is not unvanquishable."

"I admire your courage," returned the duke with insulting coolness, impelled by secret motives to say whatever he thought likely to heighten the rage and resentment of Don Ferdinand, "but pity your rashness. In compassion to your youth, urge me not on to such a fatal deed; dispense my valour from unequal arms; no honour follows such a victory, nor any glory from so safe a field. The combat would be ended at a blow, and leave me nothing but regret for thee."

"I despise your pity, and disdain your threats. Can he who wounds my honour wish my life?"

"Well, since you find it burthensome, I will attend you; but am sorry that it must be at the expense of it you redeem your father's honour."

They quitted the castle by a private portal, and proceeded to a glade in the centre of the forest. Day was already closed in; but overhead the moon sat arbitress, and nearer to the earth wheeled her pale course. Here they unsheathed their swords: long and stubborn was the contest; each proved himself a master of the weapon he wielded.

"By St. Jago, this is no boy's play," at length cried the duke; "I see I was a little too vain, Don Ferdinand, when I imagined I should easily subdue you: but the longer the strife, the greater the pleasure of conquering."

At last he received a wound in his arm. The moment Don Ferdinand found him wounded, he demanded a parley.

"Be brief, then," returned the duke, haughtily, and leaning on his sword.

"Though warm in my resentments," said Don Ferdinand, "I am not implacable—towards the duke of Osma, of all men living, I am least inclined to be so. Having satisfied the laws of honour, by taking the field against him, I can now, without incurring unworthy imputations, propose terms of accommodation, such as, in the first instance, neither pride nor regard for my reputation would permit me to think of—let this unhappy affair end here, by your consenting to apologize, in the presence of all who witnessed the affront, for the insult offered to the marquis."

"Audacious boy!" exclaimed the duke, in a voice of thunder, "defend thyself; thy blood only can atone for the insolence of such a proposition."

He attacked him with renewed fury, but the combat was not of much longer duration: Ferdinand wished to be but on the defensive, but the violence of the duke defeated his effort—in aiming at his breast, the haughty chief received his sword in his own bosom, and instantly fell.

But never did victory inflict such anguish on a victor.

Horror-struck at the thoughts of having slain the father of Elvina, he stood for some moments bending over him in silent anguish, vainly wishing their fates reversed, when suddenly discovering, by a faint

movement, that he was not yet dead, he darted, almost with the rapidity of lightning, from the spot, for the purpose of procuring him assistance ; and was on the point of entering the castle, when prevented by his friend, Don Julio, who, in consequence of calling at the Almeria palace, and hearing from the marquis what had passed, had hastened after him, in hopes of preventing the fatal catastrophe that had taken place.

"Your looks alarm me, De Hara," he cried, seizing him by the arm. "Surely if the duke has fallen by your hand, you would not be mad enough to enter the castle."

The unhappy Ferdinand groaned : "I care not about myself," he replied ; "if there be any chance of saving him, it is by obtaining him immediate aid."

"Trust to me to procure it," returned his friend, "and do you retire to a place of security ; however indifferent, on your own account, you may be about your safety, yet, in consideration to the feelings of your father and your friends, you should pay some attention to it."

This latter suggestion had the desired effect—Don Ferdinand promised to repair immediately to the cell of Father Anselm, and Don Julio hastened into the castle, to procure the requisite assistance for his fallen opponent.

But, to the utter consternation of all, on reaching the spot where Don Ferdinand had left him, he was not to be found.

Unable to account for his disappearance, in any other way than by supposing he had been discovered by some straggling marauders, and dragged to a distance, for the purpose of being stripped, the party were on the point of dispersing through the forest, when a messenger arrived from the abbot of St. Ildefonso, to say that he had been discovered by two

of the monks, in their way back from a neighbouring village, where they had been administering to the sick, and conveyed by them to the convent, but without their knowing who he was, owing to the darkness of the hour, till their arrival there; when, it being deemed unsafe to remove him, a surgeon was summoned, who pronouncing his wound mortal, the duke, who, during the examination of it, had recovered his senses, desired his daughter might immediately be sent for.

Olivia was sought, but in vain, to break these afflicting tidings to her; and at length the painful task devolved upon the messenger of the abbot.

She received them with the most acute sensations of sorrow; with feelings that, for a few minutes, took from her the power of obeying his summons. Then, with a degree of wildness, as if fearful she should not reach his chamber in time to receive his last blessing, and be assured he did not die in anger with her, she rushed through the gallery, and at the foot of the stairs was met by the abbot, who, taking her cold trembling hand, led her to the cell where her expiring father lay.

The ghastliness of his countenance, as displayed to view by the faint light of a glimmering taper, for a few minutes again overpowered her; then, a little recovering herself, she approached his bed, and throwing herself on her knees, took the hand which he extended to her, and bathed it with her tears.

"Elvina," cried the duke, in accents solemnly impressive, "exert yourself; and, instead of paining my last moments by useless tears and lamentations, let them be soothed by the assurance that my death shall not go unrevenged.

"I would have spared you the pain of beholding me in this state, but that I could not deny to myself the melancholy consolation of seeing you again, and

thinking I had left you happy, by the assurance, that I consented to your bestowing your hand where you had already plighted your affections ; but on this condition, that should your application to the throne for justice on my murderer be rejected, sir Eustace himself undertakes the office of avenging me.

“ That so valiant a knight, and so ardent a lover, will have any hesitation in complying with this condition, I cannot believe. Should the result, however, prove me mistaken in my opinion of him, remember, your hand must be reserved for him who shall undertake your cause ; for it is from knighthood you must seek for redress, should it be denied you by the king.

“ From the hand of Ferdinand De Hara I have met my death. Filial piety, I know, will be urged in extenuation of the deed ; but believe not the perfidious plea—to rancour, malice, rage at my rejecting his addresses, and thus disappointing the ambitious and sordid views of himself and family, is it owing.

“ Attend not, therefore, to the various statements which I am aware will be fabricated for your ear ; but, as you hope to retain my last blessing, by the respect you owe my memory, and the regard you feel for your own reputation, I charge you to revenge my death : by your hopes of happiness, here and hereafter, swear to let no intercession, however exalted the station from which it proceeds, induce you to forego your just resentment.”

“ I swear,” cried the trembling Elvina, raising her hands and eyes towards heaven.

“ Enough,” replied the duke ; “ I am satisfied,” kissing her pale cheek, and solemnly blessing her ; the peace you have given to my last moments, be thine, my sweet one, at the same awful hour. Long and happy may thy days be ; and from the oblivion of the tomb, may thy name be rescued, by the repu-

tation thou shalt leave behind thee. Keep ever in view thy origin, and then thou canst not fail of acting worthy of a descendant of the house of Lara.

"It is unnecessary, I know, to recommend to your kindness my faithful servants and dependants. Olivia I could have wished to have seen; but since denied that satisfaction, assure her I retained to the last a pleased remembrance of her fidelity and attachment." Then again kissing her, he averted his face, with a motion for her to retire.

Regardless of this, however, Elvina clung to him.

"Oh! my father," she cried, "must I be denied the sad consolation of remaining with you?"

The duke, after a momentary pause, evidently occasioned by emotion, informed her he wished to be left alone with his confessor; but added, if able to bear her presence again, she should be sent for.

Compelled to withdraw, the sorrowing Elvina repaired to the oratory; where, sinking on her knees, her fervent prayers were offered up to heaven for his recovery; but prayers continually interrupted by tears, at the little probability there appeared of their proving availing—no, she already saw the tomb opening to receive him, already saw him mingling with the awful shades of his forefathers.

She started at every murmur, but a considerable time elapsed without any one appearing. Suspense at length becoming intolerable, she was on the point of descending from the oratory, when father Jeromé, the abbot, suddenly appeared before her. His looks chilled her very soul, suspended the question that hovered on her lips.

"Daughter," he cried, in solemn accents, "resignation is our duty: your noble father has breathed his last—peace to his soul, and consolation to those he has left to mourn him!"

The blow was expected, but this circumstance did not lessen the shock it gave her—like a lily bent to

the earth by the pitiless storm, she sunk fainting in the arms of the father.

On recovering, she found her sympathizing Olivia bending over her.

"Ah! my Olivia," she cried, "how sudden has been our loss!"

"Sudden indeed!" repeated Olivia; "but transient is the nature of all earthly joys, uncertain the tenure by which human life is held—ere we hear its distant murmur, the thunder bursts with appalling fury over our heads—while basking in the sunshine, we are often overtaken by the storm—the falling leaves, the withering face of nature, announce the expiration of the year; but man often sinks into the grave without any indication of his approaching end; ere we think the time of his fading near, the blast that shall scatter his leaves is gathering. These sudden strokes, these unexpected casualties, might well astonish and overwhelm us, but that we know they could not happen without the permission of him who, as he gives, so has a right to take away."

Elvina now required to be re-conducted to the chamber of death, but was peremptorily refused by the abbot; her father's last words were that she should not be indulged in any thing that had a tendency to enervate her mind, and thus retard the accomplishment of her vengeance; and the commands of the dead must ever be held sacred he added.

Elvina bowed her head—"Forever sacred will his be considered by me," she cried. "It would have afforded me a kind of melancholy pleasure to have gazed once more upon his countenance, to have bathed it with my tears: but the consolation which duty forbids, I am content to resign."

CHAP. VIII.

Speak on, and ease your labouring breast ; it swells,
And sinks again, and then it swells so high,
It looks as it would break. I know 'tis big
With something you would utter.

BUSIRIS.

IN an agony of impatience for the appearance of Don Julio, the wretched Ferdinand hurried, in the course of a few minutes, from the cell of father Anselm to the cloisters through which he had to pass in his way to it ; with distracted steps he traversed these lonely walks of holy meditation, now darting forward, in consequence of fancying he heard an approaching step ; now stopping short in an agony of disappointment at finding himself mistaken ; for Don Julio had resolved on not rejoining him, until acquainted with the result of the duke's conference with his daughter.

Unconsciously he advanced towards the enclosure containing the tomb of the unfortunate lovers, whose story he had related to Elvina. The sight of it recalled a thousand dear ideas, awakened a thousand affecting recollections. A flood of tears gushed from him—" And Oh !" he despairingly exclaimed, as the big drops coursed one another down his manly cheeks, and the thought of having lost her forever, of the anguish he had been the means of inflicting on her, obtruded itself on him—" will no kind friend intercede in my behalf ? will no voice do justice to my feelings, or vindicate my crime against her ?"

As he leant, almost exhausted by the violence of his emotions, against a pillar, he saw advancing from beneath an opposite arch the shadowy figure of a female, who, on drawing nearer, he discovered to be Olivia. Involuntarily pronouncing her name, he rushed forward, with something like a sensation of joy at seeing her; but to his unutterable dismay, instead of appearing to participate in this feeling, she instantly drew back and disappeared.

"Is misery then so contagious?" cried Don Ferdinand, in bitterness of soul, as he stood beneath the gloomy archway, whither he had involuntarily pursued her, "as to occasion it to be thus shunned? or is it horror at the thoughts of my being the destroyer of her generous patron that makes her fly me? Oh! if such be her feelings, what will not those of Elvina be!"

Overwhelmed with anguish at the idea, he was retreating, when he again heard a step, and, impelled by a hope that it might be Olivia, repentant of her conduct towards him, returning, sprung forward; but instead of her, beheld Don Rodolph hastily passing.

Other sensations now took possession of his mind: rage, indignation, and jealousy, at his thus continually hovering about the castle; and convinced it was owing to some unworthy motive, he resolved to take an early opportunity of apprising the fair heiress of the circumstance.

In the mean while, urged by a restless impulse, he pursued his steps. After following him some time, at a sufficient distance not to be discovered, he at length lost sight of him near a ruined tower, at the extremity of the vale beneath the castle windows, and which had formerly united the outworks in this direction.

Under an idea that he might have entered it, he 'the door; but finding it locked, and convinced,

From its ponderous size, it could not have been opened without his hearing it, he was about retiring, when he fancied he heard a faint moan from the upper part of the building.

He immediately retreated a few steps from it, and looking up, thought he saw something moving at a grated window near the top; he directly called out to know whether any one was confined there, conjuring them to speak, if such was the case, and rely on his services.

A deeper groan than he had before heard again reached him, and immediately after, as well as the faint twilight would permit him to discern, he saw a hand thrust through the bars, and waving him nearer.

He was approaching, when his ear was pierced by a dreadful shriek, followed by the disappearance of the object he had seen, and a total silence.

Again he tried the door, but its massive strength rendered his efforts to force it unavailing. He listened, but no sound met his ear from within it, save the whistling of the wind through the rents of the building, and at length the reflection of the uneasiness his friend would experience, should he not find him as expected, occurring, he withdrew, but not without reluctance, and often turning back to gaze upon the dismal walls, under the fearful impression of some foul deed being at the moment perpetrating within them.

He found his friend impatiently awaiting him in the cell of father Anselm.

Instantly grasping his arm, in a voice faltering through emotion, he inquired what hope?

"Of the duke's recovery," returned Don Julio, shrinking from the cruelty of keeping him in suspense, "none; your sword has been a faithful avenger of your injured honour. With his life he has atoned for his offence."

"And with it ends all hope of happiness," returned the despairing Ferdinand.

"Not so, I hope," rejoined Don Julio; "exclusive of the happiness which a mind like yours must ever derive from the consciousness of performing its duty, you may still look forward to that of possessing the object of your regard."

"Oh, never, never!" passionately exclaimed the unhappy youth. "Wrong her not by so horrible a supposition—wrong her not by supposing it possible she could be prevailed on to join her hand with one stained with the blood of her parent."

"But she may wed you under your assumed name."

"What! deceive her into becoming my bride?"

"If too scrupulous, I much fear you will raise insurmountable obstacles to your happiness; but of this you will be the best judge yourself, when you hear what I have to relate."

Don Julio then proceeded to give him the particulars of the last conference that had taken place between the duke and his daughter, as he had heard it from an attendant who was present at it.

"You see, therefore," cried he as he concluded, "how very improbable it is you should ever gain her under your real name."

"Oh yes, too clearly!" rejoined the distracted Ferdinand.

"If you cannot give her up without misery, why hesitate about the only measure that can ensure her yours?"

"You almost stagger my resolution, if I thought she would ever forgive the deception."

"I can scarcely think she would deny her forgiveness to a measure solely dictated by love."

"Well, I will deliberate a little further on the subject ere I finally decide," returned Don Ferdinand; "to relinquish Elvina is misery, yet to deceive her is almost equally painful."

Don Julio now reminded him of the consideration due to the feelings of the marquis, whose anxiety about him must be intolerable ; adding, that as soon as he saw him to his palace, he should hasten to court, to learn what was likely to accrue from his disobedience to the commands of the king. They accordingly took leave of the friendly father Anselm, and repairing to the forest, found the attendants of Don Julio there waiting with horses for them.

In his hurry to depart, however, Don Ferdinand did not forget to acquaint the father with the incident of the tower, and received from him the satisfactory assurance of immediately taking measures for inquiring into the affair.

Don Julio preceded his friend into the apartment of the marquis. He found him in a state of trembling apprehension, but an apprehension which vanished the moment he cast his eyes upon the beaming countenance of the young knight.

He saw by his looks he was safe, and his soul ascended in gratitude to heaven for the preservation of his "beautiful, his brave son." Then, with a voice faltering through emotion, he demanded to see him, impatient to pay his grateful tribute of deserved praise.

After the first transports of his joy had subsided, and the particulars of all that had happened were made known to him, he tried to reanimate his too evidently dejected son, and inspirit him to overcome his passion, but in vain.

"No," returned the unhappy youth, in a tone solemnly impressive, "my heart is incapable of change —besides, disgrace and infamy alike attend the coward warrior, and the faithless lover. Even if I could prevail on myself to make an effort to break the chains I pride to wear, I know it must prove useless. Far dearer to me than life, than liberty, than all but honour is Elvina."

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" But if all hope of calling her yours is over, is it not madness to cherish her idea? Come, come, my son, rouse to the combat, and thou art sure to conquer."

Here Don Julio interfered, to inform the marquis of the chance that yet remained of his friend's being happy.

Like his son, however, the proud heart of the marquis revolted from the idea of his being indebted to deception for the accomplishment of his wishes. After a little reflection, however, the consideration of his happiness solely depending on their completion, induced him to determine on not opposing the measure, should Don Ferdinand himself be able to overcome his reluctance to it.

The king received the tidings of the duke of Osma's death with mingled emotions; notwithstanding the displeasure he had incurred, he could not help lamenting the premature fall of so renowned a chief; and though obliged secretly to acknowledge the rigour of his fate justified by his temerity, yet could not on this account think of excusing the disregard shown to his commands by Don Ferdinand. In a word, as he had resolved, in the person of the duke, on setting an example of the consequences likely to accrue from crossing his authority, so now, in that of Don Ferdinand, he determined on the same; and accordingly gave the necessary orders for his being taken into custody.

These, through the vigilance of his friend Don Julio, were made known to him in time to enable him to escape to the convent of St. Ildefonso, where, through the kindness of the good father Anselm, he was sure of a secret asylum. Yet not for a moment would he have prevented the royal mandate from being carried into effect, but for the discovery of all he at present wished concealed, that must im-

mediately have followed it ; no, on the contrary, his proud soul would have made him rather meet than shrink from the coming storm.

But of all places this was the one in which he was least likely to recover any portion of tranquillity, or receive any alleviation of his anguish, the solemn rites performing for the deceased duke not for a moment permitting his thoughts to be detached from the subject that oppressed them.

The funeral at length took place. The chief friends and relatives of the illustrious house of Osma attended it, preceded by a long procession of priests chanting solemn dirges. The darkness of midnight was dissipated by a thousand tapers—the swelling echoes of the pile awakened by innumerable voices.

During mass, the emblazoned banners of the deceased were displayed in front of the great altar by four knights ; his sword, his shield, his spear, and war-horse, were successively offered by four other nobles, each supported by a knight of equal rank.

The scene was at once grand, solemn, and impressive. Death, at all times affecting, is rendered still more so by these pageantries ; we involuntarily contrast the transient splendour with the gloomy oblivion to which the dead are so soon to be consigned.

Urged by resistless feelings, Don Ferdinand in disguise mingled with the crowd assembled to witness the ceremony, and followed the body to the vault destined to receive it. The gloomy appearance of this repository of death, the chilly and unwholesome dampness of the air, the mournful light produced by a few scattered tapers, as they dimly gleamed upon the tarnished ornaments of the coffins, that filled the surrounding niches, served to render still more acute the sensations of the unhappy Ferdinand.

“ And Oh ! how different, under the influence of these sensations,” he involuntarily exclaimed to him-

self, “is this stillness, this chilling silence, to the busy the tumultuous scenes in which thy restless spirit, Osma, delighted! How narrow the space now occupied by thee, whose ambition was so boundless ! With three steps I compass thy grave, Oh ! thou who wast so mighty before, the trumpet may summon to the war, without now awaking thee by its clangour ; the battle rage, even to the walls of thy narrow house, without raising thee from the bed of thy repose ! And to this dreary state, this dismal dull oblivion, have I the horror of thinking I prematurely hurried thee ! Oh ! why, noble Osma, provoke the fatal stroke !—why, though regardless of life on thy own account, not estimate it on that of others !”

Unable to control his emotions, he hurried from the spot, and hastening to a remote and unfrequented part of the edifice, passed the waning night in a state of indescribable anguish.

But something was now to be decided on ; the funeral of her father over, it was not to be expected lady Elvina would much longer delay the performance of the solemn duty she had still to fulfil.

Accordingly, after a little further hesitation on the subject, he at length determined on yet retaining his assumed name, and seeing her, if possible, the ensuing evening.

This was the first time the fair orphan had suffered herself to quit the walls of the castle since the death of her father. Oppressed with languor, she walked forth, to try what effect the air would have upon her—to grief for her father was added an intolerable anxiety concerning the supposed St. Valery. She could no otherwise account for not seeing or hearing from him, during this season of affliction, especially convinced as she was of his being apprised of what had passed respecting him in her last conference with the deceased duke, than by suppo-

sing him false to his vows—an idea which, spite of the suggestions of pride, overwhelmed her with anguish.

After wandering some time through the embowering shades of the garden with her faithful Olivia, she seated herself on a verdant bank, near a murmuring fountain, and o'ershadowed with luxuriant cypresses, whose funereal gloom seemed to render them an appropriate canopy for her at present.

The evening beam, that from the cloud of the west had gilded the prospect, was by this time faded ; the clouds of night came rolling down the dark brown steeps, and at intervals a crescent moon breaking through them, shed a pale gleam on the bosom of a neighbouring lake.

The scene was in unison with the feelings of the lovely mourner—nor was its effect lessened by the guitar of her Moorish page Zelim, a youth whom she had lately taken into her service, and who, through the intervening trees, was espied, seated in a melancholy attitude, near the edge of the lake, accompanying the instrument with the following simple ballad :

There came to the shore, Count Julian complaining,
The winds whistled shrill, through his time-bleached locks,
O'er his treason he sigh'd, when at evening repairing
To wander forlorn, 'midst the sea-beaten rocks;

The waves that roll'd near him, fix'd his eyes wand'ring glances,

For they bath'd the rough rocks of his own native soil,
Where in martial array with Castile's renown'd lances,
He often had stript the proud foe of his spoil.

" Oh! my country," he cried, " incessant's my anguish,
And deep my remorse for my crimes against thee;
With horror I freeze, in sorrow I languish,
For the injuries thou hast sustained from me.

Accur's'd was the hour when to dire revenge yielding—

To the foes of my faith I committed my cause—
When with passion infuriate, the sword madly wielding,
I caus'd the o'erthrowing your customs and laws.

“ Rent, rent are your banners, despoil’d are your altars,
With the blood of your sons are crimson’d your waves;
Those gallant defenders, my trembling tongue falters
When pronouncing the word, I have render’d them slaves.
The treason abetting—the traitor despising,
The abject revile me, the noble distrust;
No bosom responds at my sorrowful sighing.
No voice but proclaims my punishment just.

“ Oh ! Cora, my daughter, thy charms once delighting,
Have led to my ruin, as well as thy own;
But for these, royal Rodrigue, now in solitudes hiding,
Might still have enjoy’d his treasures and throne.
Yet, ah ! when I think on thee, sad and forsaken,
My bosom, relenting, forbids the stern vow,
When in dreams I beheld thee all pale and despairing,
To pardon thee neither hereafter or now.

“ In what gloomy grotto, what cave of the ocean,
Dost thou cover thy shame, dost thou hide thy disgrace?
Ah ! dost thou not think, with reading emotion,
Of the days that are past, of virtue and peace?
Oh ! yes, in wild accents I hear thee bewailing
The errors of youth, the days that are gone,
Thy radiant eyes closing, thy youthful strength failing,
The shriek of the seamew thy funeral song.

“ Oh ! where are the hopes so long were indulg’d in—
Lost like the tears I drop in the waves;
Oh ! where the bright joys, so gay, so inviting—
Scatter’d like autumn’s fast-falling leaves.
No child will survive me, no friend again hail me—
All lost is my glory, and blasted my fame;
If I live in the annals of my ruin’d, bleeding country,
’Twill be but to bear a traitor’s foul name.

“ Ah ! never again in the proud swelling towers,
Where wander the shades of those I’ve disgrac’d
Ah ! never again shall I pass the sweet hours,
Or hear the grey bards sing heroes deceas’d.

Release me, kind Heaven, from this world of sorrow,
Accept my repentance, behold my despair;
Ohr! seal up those eyes ere the dawn of to-morrow,
This night let me mingle with the sons of the air."

Soon after Zelim had concluded, he arose, and sauntered out of sight; and after a further silence of a few minutes, Elvina involuntarily recurred to the subject which now chiefly occupied her thoughts; but scarce had she uttered the name of St. Valery, when a low rustling amidst the trees behind her made her turn hastily round, and by the faint ray which the evening star shed upon the spot, she beheld through the trees a glittering vest; she started, and was on the point of rising, when she was prevented by the sudden prostration of a figure before her; she cast a fearful glance at it, and discovered the features of her lover.

A faint shriek escaped her at his unexpected appearance, and for a moment, overpowered by emotion, her face was buried in the bosom of Olivia; then a little recovering herself, she motioned him to rise, and let her pass—adding, “she could not, from his recent conduct, suppose his being there was owing to any wish to converse with her.”

But instead of obeying her, the unhappy Ferdinand maintained his kneeling posture, in order to try and deprecate the resentment he too evidently saw he had incurred; and at length so thoroughly succeeded in convincing her that his late seeming neglect was owing not to want of sympathy, but unwillingness to behold the sorrow which he conceived he had not the power of mitigating, as to receive her hand in token of forgiveness, and be allowed to take the seat which Olivia had vacated to him next her.

To dwell on the scene that followed this reconciliation, is unnecessary—suffice it, that the soothing effect which his fond attentions, his persuasive eloquence, his ardent protestations of unalterable love, had upon the mind of his gentle mistress, was quickly dissipated, by the agitation he evinced when the subject of her last conference with her father came to be discussed.

The sudden paleness that overspread his countenance, the wild expression of his rolling eyes alarmed her ; and in accents faltering through presageful fears, she insisted on knowing the cause of his emotion—adding, it seemed to argue to her a knowledge of some insurmountable obstacle to their union.

“ Oh, no !” cried the almost-distracted Ferdinand ; “ free as we both are to act as we please, what obstacle,” he evasively added, “ can there be to it, but of our own creating ?”

“ Then why those disordered looks ?”

“ I know not, except that when I reflect on your ~~transcendent~~ merits, I cannot help fearing the happiness of possessing such a treasure will never be mine.”

“ Such fears are injurious both to yourself and me,” replied the lovely Elvina, warmly.

“ Then banish them entirely,” cried the agitated lover, in the most impassioned tone, “ by consenting to the immediate celebration of our nuptials, and thus rendering assurance doubly sure.”

“ Impossible !” she returned : “ till the season of mourning for my father is expired, and his death avenged, nothing shall ever induce me to change my state. Besides, it was on condition that you undertook my cause, should I be denied justice from the throne, that he consented to our union ; and never will I swerve from what I know to be his will. But you turn pale again, St. Valery,” she continued, attentively observing him, and with a look of horror per-

ceiving him avert his countenance from her ; " do you then shrink from the condition on which my hand is to be given ? "

" Shrink from it ! " repeated the agonized Ferdinand, starting from his seat, and elevating his clasped hands towards Heaven—" No, if to prove myself worthy of it, 'tis requisite the blood of De Hara should be shed by me, even in your presence it shall flow—there shall he breathe his last sigh, but too happy, in my opinion, to expire before you."

" Unhappy youth ! though my foe, I cannot help pitying him," said Elvina, in accents indicative of her sincerity.

" Your foe ! " involuntarily repeated Don Ferdinand, in a voice at once mournful and tender. Then suddenly checking the declaration that was about bursting from his lips—" and think you you can possibly have a foe ? "

" Alas ! in him too surely. Yet in vain I strive, by dwelling on the enmity of his house to mine, to overcome the reluctance I feel to proceed against him—nothing can subdue it. Still, however, am I solemnly determined on fulfilling my promise to my father. But oh, St. Valery ! how shall I rejoice, when the dreadful task delegated to me is over !—how hail the hour, which again gives me to enjoy, without interruption, the delicious tranquillity of my native shades, with thee for my companion ! "

" Delusive thought !" murmured Don Ferdinand, in the broken accents of internal agitation ; then, unable longer to control his emotions, he was rushing from the spot, with a hasty adieu to her, when still more alarmed by his manner, she caught him by the cloak.

" You terrify me, St. Valery," she cried, " by the wildness of your gestures ! Something, I am convinced, weighs upon your heart which you fear to dis-

close. Let me not be tormented with anxiety : than my bosom, there cannot be a safer repository for any secret that may torment you : fear not to speak ; rely on all that love or friendship can do to serve you."

" Oh, Heavens!" groaned the unhappy lover, " what a fate is mine ! Elvina," in a voice scarcely articulate, he added, " most amiable and generous of human beings ! how shall I answer you ? All I can say is, pity me, and when you offer up your orisons for the afflicted, let not your lover be forgotten !" Then breaking from her hold, he darted from the spot, and in an instant was out of sight.

Olivia, who had walked to some little distance, in order not to be a restraint on them, now speedily rejoined her, and was at once alarmed and surprised at the disorder in which she found her—she eagerly inquired the cause, and was briefly informed : she did not deny, from what she heard, that there was reason to believe some secret, he durst not reveal, weighed upon the heart of St. Valery, and both became bewildered in conjecturing the nature of it.

In the midst of the conversation to which his mysterious conduct gave rise, their ears were suddenly invaded by a deep sepulchral voice behind them, exclaiming—" St. Valery is unworthy of being the subject of your discourse, unworthy of the place he occupies in the thoughts of lady Elvina—his vows, his affections, have long been another's—interest only leads him to her shrine. This warning comes from one who is an invisible witness of the actions of others, and admonishes the heiress of Osma to attend to it, as she regards her future weal !"

Starting from their seats, both hastily examined the spot from whence the voice proceeded, and which was a small opening amongst the trees, but without perceiving any one—neither did any sudden motion, or rustling amid the trees, announce the disappearance of any one from it.

Seized with a sensation of terror mingled with reverential awe, they retreated to the castle where at length a torrent of tears restored the fair Elvina to the use of the faculties which agitation had nearly suspended.

She knew not what to think of the recent circumstance—"But be the voice I heard," she cried, "that of an inhabitant of heaven or earth, equally will I attend to it. The conduct of St. Valery justifies this determination—he must prove, beyond a doubt, the assertions against him unfounded, or from this hour all correspondence ceases between us."

It was accordingly decided, that the next morning, through his friend, father Anselm, he should be informed of this determination.

In the mean while, full of regret for not having been able to maintain a greater command over himself, Don Ferdinand returned to the convent, where his friend, Don Julio, waited impatiently to learn the result of his interview with his mistress; yet was he not without a faint hope that such a turn might be given to what had dropped from him, as to prevent any unpleasant inquiries in consequence; and also that from the tenderness Elvina had manifested for him, she might be induced to give him her hand sooner than she at first intended.

This hope, however, was annihilated by Olivia the next morning, who, in her way to the cell of father Anselm, met him in the cloisters, contrary to her expectations; and with the incident of the preceding night, communicated to him the determination lady Elvina had formed in consequence of it.

The explanation he wished to delay he saw could no longer be avoided, and maddened at the consequences likely to result from it, he started from Olivia, ere she had well concluded the communication she had to make him, destroying, by his confusion and

precipitate retreat, the hope she had indulged in, of his being guiltless of the charges brought against him.

That his accuser was either Don Rodolph, or some one in his interest, he had no doubt: to know the quarter, however, whence the accusation came, afforded him no satisfaction, since he could not disprove it, without his renunciation of a name essential to his happiness yet a little longer to have retained.

But though agonized by this idea, he was not so entirely absorbed by it, as not to feel some anxiety to know by what means Don Rodolph had this uncontroled access to the castle.

On this subject, however, he was unable to obtain any satisfaction from father Anselm, to whom his inquiries respecting it were addressed; neither had he been more fortunate with respect to the affair of the tower. He had immediately, he said, acquainted the warden of the castle with it, and in return was informed that the key belonging to it had long been lost, and that he was so convinced the circumstance he alluded to was an ideal one, that he could not permit a forced admission to it.

Of the reality, however, of what he had seen and heard, Don Ferdinand was so thoroughly convinced, that but for the situation in which he at present stood, he probably would have made an effort for entering it; but in the prospect of losing Elvina, every other consideration became absorbed.

The approaching night should at least, he determined, terminate the agonies of suspense; as soon as it arrived, he resolved on repairing to the castle, and soliciting an interview with Elvina, for the purpose of revealing himself.

CHAP. IX.

Some unborn sorrow, ripe in Fortune's womb,
Now coming towards me, grieves my inmost soul.

SHAKESPEARE.

IN the mean while the beauteous Elvina was a prey to the severest anguish. In the countenance of Olivia, the moment she re-entered her apartment on her return from the convent, she read a confirmation of all her fears, and her soul fainted beneath the shock inflicted by the circumstance.

To find herself deceived there, where she had treasured up all her hopes of earthly happiness, was a stroke that required a greater effort of fortitude to support than she was at present able to make.

" Yet think not, my dear Olivia," she cried, addressing her sympathizing confidant, as soon as she had a little recovered herself, " that I shall long be overwhelmed by these regrets ; no, I should blush for myself, if I did not think that the knowledge of St. Valery's unworthiness would soon enable me to banish him my thoughts."

Olivia fervently hoped this might be the case, but at the same time, could not help fearing, that a passion deep-rooted as hers could not easily be overcome.

From the conduct of the supposed St. Valery in the morning, she was not a little surprised at receiving a private message from him, in the course of the evening, requesting a conference of a few minutes with her.

After a momentary hesitation, impelled by curiosity, more than any other motive, she complied with his request, but with a countenance expressive of the alteration her sentiments respecting him had undergone.

Convinced of this, to solicit an interview with Elvina would be useless, without re-establishing himself in some degree in her opinion ; yet at the same time determined on not making the meditated discovery, except in the presence of his lovely mistress, he ventured so far as to say, he never should have had the presumption to approach the castle again, but for the proofs he had to adduce of his innocence, and therefore entreated her to procure him the opportunity he required of vindicating it to Elvina.

This was too welcome an entreaty to be disregarded—she could not believe him capable of the folly of making such an assertion without being able to support it, and accordingly hastened to Elvina to communicate it.

To paint her feelings at hearing it were impossible —her transports, at the thought of his again proving himself worthy of the regard which she felt almost convinced, notwithstanding her protestations, length of time could alone enable her to overcome.

Olivia, having obtained her permission, withdrew for the purpose of conducting him to her presence.

His feelings at the moment may easier be conceived than described—it was the very crisis of his fate ; and the idea of the happiness or misery of his future days being on the very eve of being determined so subdued him, that for a minute after the folding doors leading into her apartment were thrown open, he stood silent and motionless, wanting courage to advance, yet deprived of power to retreat.

His looks and attitude had an immediate effect upon the feelings of Elvina—the bright glow with which

reviving hope had painted her cheeks, yielded to a death-like paleness ; and again her wildly-throbbing heart felt the chilling influence of apprehension.

" St. Valery," she cried, in faltering accents, after waiting a few minutes in expectation of hearing him speak, " tis unnecessary, I flatter myself, to say this interview would never have been granted, but for your assertion to Olivia ; if you have indeed the power of vindicating yourself, why delay doing so ?"

" Alas ! why," returned the agitated youth, in the most desponding accent, " but that I cannot prove my sincerity, without incurring the risk of losing you forever. Know then, neither interest nor love led Sir Eustace St. Valery to pay his addresses to you—he is an utter stranger to your perfections—his name only, assumed by me for the purpose of gaining admission to your presence, is known to you."

" His name !" repeated Elvina, with a look of wildness, and catching Olivia by the arm ; " what, are you not what you represented yourself to be then ? Speak, declare who are you, and your motives for this imposition ?"

Don Ferdinand sunk upon one knee, and producing the end of an embroidered scarf from his bosom—" Know you this, lady ?" he asked.

Elvina instantly recollects her own work—" Yes, well," she replied, tremblingly ; " it was the prize adjudged at the tournament held here in honour of my last birth-day, to an unknown knight, for his superior skill and valour."

" Oh happy, yet fatal honour !" rejoined Don Ferdinand, kissing with fond devotion the scarf, and returning it to his bosom " happy in allowing me to receive aught from thy hand, yet fatal in giving to my view charms, there were so many obstacles to my ever aspiring to. In birth, in fortune, I knew myself entitled to solicit your hand ; but alas ! I also

knew my equality in these respects not sufficient to obtain it. Still, however, I persevered in cherishing your image—persevered do I say!—ah! had I tried to banish it my heart, I could not have succeeded—besides, of such a treasure as I aspired to, I conceived I should be utterly undeserving, if I did not make more than common exertions to obtain it. Accordingly, I had recourse to the measures which at length were the means of introducing me to you." He then proceeded to give an explanation of the intimacy between him and St. Valery, and the double motive he had for the assumption of his name. " But an utter enemy to any thing like deception," he continued, " a thousand times the secret hovered on my lips—a thousand times was I on the point of throwing myself at your feet, and avowing the imposition I had practised on you; but as often was withheld, by a dread of the consequences that might result from the disclosure. Liberal and generous as your heart is, I nevertheless saw it was not uninfluenced by the baneful prejudices to which the obstacles I have just alluded to were owing—those fatal prejudices which have been the cause of such unhappiness to our respective houses—indeed, your own lips, put me out of doubt on the subject; they accused both me and mine of being your enemies, at the very moment when heaven can attest," raising his fine eyes towards it, " I would joyfully have opened the sluices of this heart to have rendered you a service."

" Declare your name!" exclaimed Elvina, gasping with emotion, " ere my fleeting senses entirely forsake me!"

" You vowed to your noble father," he resumed, " to avenge his death—'tis in your power to do so."

Again he paused, and looked fearfully at Elvina ; but she neither spoke nor moved—every faculty seemed suspended by horrible anticipation.

" You require the blood of Ferdinand de Hara," he added, " as an atonement for your father's ; the present moment furnishes you with an opportunity of inflicting upon him the vengeance you think he merits. Let it not be neglected—let the reflection of Justice being tardy in her course, meandering through such labyrinths of form, that often powerful guilt eludes the laws, stimulate you to take advantage of the present minute. You have your wished for victim in your power—he now kneels at your feet—he bears his bosom to the stroke—he puts into your hand," unsheathing, as he spoke, his sword, and presenting it to her, " an instrument wherewith to inflict it."

The gradually receding senses of Elvina at these words forsook her, and for some minutes she reclined, without any semblance of life, on the bosom of Olivia. Then suddenly recovering from insensibility—" Oh dreadful !" she cried, raising her clasped and trembling hands towards heaven ; " have I then voluntarily admitted to my presence the murderer of my father !—have I listened with pleasure to his vows !—have I enfolded within mine the hand stained with the blood of him who gave me being ! Oh forgive the unintentional crime ! she shudderingly added, and dropping on her knees—" forgive it, Heaven ! and thou, spirit of my father, also pardon it ! Oh ! if I could haye felt any indecision with regard to the measures I promised to pursue, this cruel deception, which has caused my acting in a manner so contrary to every feeling of propriety and nature, would at once have terminated it. Away, away !!" she added, waving him with one hand to retire, while with the other she covered her eyes, in order to ex-

clude his sight—"let me no longer be shocked by your presence here!"

" Yet, in mercy, in justice, hear me," cried the distracted lover, eagerly approaching her ; " allow me to explain the circumstances that led to the fatal catastrophe which has involved us both in misery ; and if, after hearing them, you still think me deserving of punishment, my life shall be at your disposal."

Ere Elvina had time in any manner to notice this speech, Don Julio, with a countenance of dismay, burst into the room.

" Pardon this abrupt intrusion, lady !" he exclaimed, addressing himself to the fair Elvina, as in alarm at his sudden entrance she started from the floor ; " but the occasion is urgent—private information was this evening received at the palace, of Don Ferdinand's intended visit here, under a borrowed name, and in consequence the castle is now invested with a party despatched for his apprehension."

" Oh, heavens !" cried the harassed Elvina, wringing her hands distractedly, " what malicious foe has subjected me to this obloquy !"

" Nay, Madam," interposed Don Julio, " except the information be proved correct, by Don Ferdinand being found here, the consequences you apprehend cannot result from it ; is there no place of concealment here for him ?"

Olivia, starting at this question, mentioned the gallery communicating with the convent ; but instead of suffering her instantly to conduct him thither, the wretched Ferdinand, again casting himself at the feet of Elvina, conjured her not to let him leave her, impressed with the agonizing idea of being an object of detestation to her.

Shrinking back with a look of horror—" If not desirous of completing your cruel work," she cried,

" by driving me to madness, begone, nor presume to think that ought but consideration for myself induces me to comply with the wishes of your friend. No—but for the surmises to which I dread your being discovered here would expose me, I should immediately do what filial duty prescribes, by yielding you up to the punishment you merit. Oh! cruel alternative, to be compelled to grant an asylum to the murderer of my father!"

" Again that horrid appellation!" exclaimed Don Ferdinand indignantly, as he rose from his kneeling posture: cruel, cruel Elvina! but the period will yet arrive, in which other reproaches than mine will assail you for your injustice."

The absolute necessity of immediately quitting the apartment, again suggested to him by Don Julio, he no longer delayed accompanying him and Olivia to the place of concealment; but to the consternation of all, on reaching it, they found the door locked, and the key, which usually remained in it, taken out.

Almost instantly, however, recovering from the effect this circumstance had upon him, Olivia motioned them to follow her; and obeying, after passing through several antique galleries and chambers, they at length came to a lonely apartment, where, pushing aside a pannel, she discovered to them a kind of dark closet, into which they immediately stepped; and closing the entrance, she hurried back to Elvina, who she found in a state of the most painful trepidation, the apartment she occupied not having escaped the examination of those despatched in quest of Don Ferdinand; besides, she was in momentary dread of his being discovered; and her very soul shrunk with horror, from the idea of the imputations she should incur, should he be found secreted beneath her roof.

At length, the departure of the party sent to apprehend him relieved her from this state of agony. Olivia had no sooner assured herself they were gone, than she hastened to liberate the friends.

In their way to the hall communicating with the garden, and by which she directed them to retire, they had to pass the apartment where Elvina was. Don Ferdinand meant not again to have intruded into her presence, but on catching a glimpse of her through the folding doors, he lost all command over himself, and rushing into the room, again prostrated himself before her.

(With a faint shriek she started back, and throwing herself upon a couch, covered her face with her hands, in order to avoid seeing him.)

"Am I then already grown so hateful to you?" demanded the unhappy Ferdinand, in a tone of bitterness, and eagerly rising and approaching her—"Elvina, in mercy say, what I have to hope, what to fear?"

"Torture me not by interrogations," she cried "but quit my presence; nor longer brave the shade of my father, or insult my grief, by your continuance here."

"The greatest criminals," returned he, "are allowed to plead their cause; I did but what honour compelled me; and had your noble father survived till the transports of his fury had abated, I make no doubt he would have done me the justice I merited from him; but the justice which he denied me, I will hope and flatter myself with obtaining from you, when fully acquainted with the circumstances which occasioned the event we equally deplore."

"If by justice you mean relinquishing my present intentions, indulge not such a delusive hope," she cried, with firmness, and eyes, as she uncovered them, gleaming with the feelings of her soul; "filial duty,

fame, honour, all that is dear and precious to me, impel me to avenge my father's death. Could I have wavered on the subject, the events of this night would have prevented further indecision, since nothing can so effectually tend to clear me from the imputations that may now rest upon me, from the rumour of your visiting here, as a firm adherence to my previous resolution. To-morrow's sun, therefore, shall behold me at the foot of the throne, demanding justice from it."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Don Julio, warmly; "lady, you must no longer refuse your attention to the vindication of Don Ferdinand." He then, with an impetuosity that precluded all interruption, entered into a full explanation of the circumstances previously alluded to; concluding by observing, "that had his friend acted otherwise than he did, had he suffered any consideration but that of honour to have had weight with him in the recent instance, or even shrunk for a moment in thought from the duty imposed upon him by his father, he would have proved himself unworthy of his illustrious name, unworthy of the friendship of the generous and brave."

Elvina sighed—his eloquence, spite of her efforts to steel her bosom against it, had affected her—she knew he was a cavalier incapable of wilfully misrepresenting facts, and was besides too well acquainted with the violent passions and prejudices of her deceased father, not to be aware they might involuntarily have led him to give an invidious turn to the affair. Still, however, she was determined to persevere in her promise to him, not only from the reflection that Don Ferdinand might have made some little concession on her account, but of the dangerous sophistry which love makes use of.

"Leave me, Don Julio," she said, in reply to what he had urged in defence of his friend, "my re-

solution is unalterable ; arguments, therefore, can answer no other end than to add to my distress, already too great. The blood of my father, shed almost before my eyes, shall not cry in vain for vengeance—I will not be persuaded to my eternal shame—I owe him nought but tears.”

“ For your zeal in my cause, my friend,” said Don Ferdinand, “ my gratitude can never cease ; but here let it be no longer displayed, since displeasing to her whose least wish is to me a law. Yes, madam,” he added, turning his eyes full upon her, “ I no longer seek to deprecate your resentment ; I only implore, since deemed deserving of it, you would yourself inflict on me the punishment you think I merit. Let this,” again offering her his sword, “ obtain you the satisfaction you require ; emulate in courage, as in every other virtue, the Grecian daughter, and pierce the breast of him whose hand was raised against your father.”

Elvina shrieked and fell upon the bosom of Olivia.

“ Unheard of cruelty !” she exclaimed, in a voice broken by sobs, “ to offer to my view the sword stained with the blood of my father !”

“ Since then,” resumed Don Ferdinand, after a momentary pause, “ you deny me the happiness of dying by your hand, permit me, contrary to my recent resolve, to offer a few words further in my vindication. In the late affair your father’s rashness solely was to blame ; by yielding to an unjustifiable resentment, an unprovoked fury, he covered me and mine with shame—

“ The rules of honour I need not here define—
My father injured, the disgrace was mine.”

“ But, oh God !” continued the unhappy youth, looking upwards, “ thou canst witness with what reluctance, what pangs, I thought of revenging the af-

front—never was vengeance before so tardy in its course. In the fatal field, I strove to soften the haughty spirit of your father into some concession, that might preserve my honour without endangering his life; but, alas! his violent prejudices rendered him inexorable to the voice of reason. It now only remains for me to add, that, judging of you by myself, in the midst of my anguish I still indulged a hope, that the man, whom brave and generous you loved, you would hate, if even to love a slave, and that against your heart I would gain applause, by redressing the wrongs of an injured parent."

"Oh! agonizing situation!" cried Elvina, in a low murmuring voice, subdued to softness by this impassioned yet unstudied appeal to her feelings. Then a little recollecting herself, and raising her head from the shoulder of Elvina—"You have set me an example, Don Ferdinand," she added, in a firmer tone, "which I shall strive to emulate—you have proved to me that a sense of duty should supersede every other consideration—as thy fatal valour revenged thy father, so shall my filial duty avenge my parent!"

"Impossible!" again exclaimed Don Julio; "after such a statement, you surely cannot persevere in such a resolution!"

"How! when my honour and my fame are concerned! Thou shalt find I am capable of aught I deem to be my duty."

"Defer not then thy rigorous design," said Don Ferdinand, with a kind of gloomy resentment; "to thee I freely resign the life you seek. Let not tedious justice, I repeat, retard your glory and my punishment. By thy dead father, I conjure thee, revenge thyself his death. I shall esteem myself far more fortunate slain by thy hand than living with thy hate."

"Away," cried, Elvina, impatiently. "Alas ! thou knowest but too well I cannot hate thee."

"Oh ! transporting acknowledgment !" exclaimed Don Ferdinand, in an ecstacy ; "repeat it, repeat it, my Elvina !

"Repeat it !" cried she faintly, and hiding her face against the shoulder of Olivia ; "Oh never ! nor think to triumph from the weakness of my heart ; even by the spirit of him whom your rash hand so prematurely hurried to the grave, I swear to fulfil the promise I made him."

"You may doom me to the rack," said he, passionately, "but you cannot erase from my mind the words you have just uttered. Oh, my Elvina !" in faltering accents he added, "what tears have not our fathers caused us !"

A deep sigh burst from the struggling bosom of his beauteous mistress. "Oh ! had my sire," she cried, hurried on in spite of herself by the feelings he had awakened, "fallen by any other hand than thine, thy presence then to my afflicted soul would have been a certain consolation, my grief would have yielded to thy sympathy, my tears would have been checked by seeing thine mingle with them. But go," she wildly added, "the shades of night befriend your lonely way—begone then, for never could I survive the suspicions that must be excited should you be discovered here."

"Adieu then," said Don Ferdinand, in accents expressive of mingled passion and despair ; "adieu then," kissing his hand to her as he retreated towards the door. "Most beloved, most adored ! I go a dying life to lead, till thou hast fixed my doom."

For some minutes after he had disappeared from her sight Elvina remained motionless ; then throwing herself on a couch, she gave way, in convulsive sobs and broken exclamations, to the wild anguish of her

heart, to the despair with which the sudden destruction of all her flattering hopes and expectations had filled her—"Oh cruel fate!" she exclaimed, "Oh fatal difference! one day, one hour to misery bequeaths my future years?"

Olivia besought her to try and compose herself and think of taking some repose!"

"Oh talk not to me of repose!" she passionately interrupted, "while such contending passions rend my breast, while love and duty thus struggle with equal violence for empire over me—yes, with shame I confess Don Ferdinand still combats my father in my heart."

"And why with shame?" demanded Olivia; "Oh! you should as much glory in the passion you feel for him as in the one he entertains for you. You cannot complain of your fate, since it rests with yourself whether it shall be happy or miserable. 'Tis in your power to absolve Don Ferdinand, to pardon the noble youth, and reward his merit, and justice demands you should do so. If, as St. Valery I wished him possessed of your hand, a thousand times more do I now that I know him the son of the marquis Almeria; and should you persevere in refusing him your hand, you will, though unwillingly, commit an act of the greatest injustice."

"Of injustice!" repeated Elvina, raising her head to look at her; "surely I misunderstand you. Can it be denominated an act of injustice to avenge the death of my father, and refuse my hand to him who slew him? Tell me what it is you meant by the expression."

"Question me not," replied Olivia, in an agitated manner; "only say you abandon your present intentions against Don Ferdinand."

"Never!" returned Elvina with vehemence; "that I feel I cannot cease to love him, that my heart is distracted in the cruel conflict between love

and duty, I acknowledge. Alas ! I could not, if I would deny it : but my soul is still the same—still am I resolved to maintain my fame, though at the expense of all I hold most dear."

" You seek then to destroy Don Ferdinand ?" said Olivia, emphatically.

" Oh, dreadful idea !" cried Elvina, shuddering ; " to what a sad alternative am I reduced !" Then throwing herself on her knees—" Oh ! strengthen, support me heaven !" she added ; " in this arduous conflict, uphold my sinking resolution, enable me to resist the arguments by which it is assailed, the still more dangerous pleadings of my own heart ! Ah, Olivia ! torture me not by further solicitations, nor by espousing the cause of Don Ferdinand, let me imagine you totally forgetful of the kind friend of many years."

" Heaven knows," said Olivia with tears, touched to the soul by this indirect reproach, " I grieve for his fate ; but still there is a consideration that urges me to plead for Don Ferdinand."

" I will not ask you to explain it," said Elvina, as she rose from her kneeling posture, " since determined on the measures I shall pursue. In your anxiety for my happiness, I see clearly you forget the lasting stigma I should draw upon myself, were I to act otherwise than I intend."

Pursuant to her resolution, the ensuing morning found her preparing for her visit to court. In vain her heart pleaded for Don Ferdinand—in vain her fancy pictured him under the most seducing forms—in vain the tender, the affectionate Olivia, anxious for her happiness, and interested in the fate of the noble youth, knelt to implore her to relinquish her intention. She persevered in it, from a conviction of being under a sacred obligation to revenge her father,

CHAP. X.

Her brimful eyes, that ready stood,
And only wanted will to weep a flood,
Released their watery store, and poured amain,
Like clouds low hung, a sober shower of rain,
Mute, solemn sorrows, free from female noise,
Such as the majesty of grief destroys.

DRYDEN.

WITH a heart torn with anguish, Don Ferdinand regained the convent. Elvina's involuntary acknowledgment, of not being able to banish him her heart, far from lessening, rather heightened his misery, since, in proportion to the strength of her affection for him, must her distress be, he was aware, at the idea of appearing as a foe against him.

From all that had passed in their recent interview, he could not avoid thinking, an opinion in which Don Julio concurred with him, that but for the dread she entertained of being accused of giving him secret encouragement, she never would have persevered in her intention of doing so; and consequently not without rage could he reflect on the malice of Don Randolph, to whom he attributed the information which had awakened that dread, and thus rendered still more distant than ever, all hope of a happy termination to his present sufferings.

In the midst of his regrets, he was surprised by the presence of his father; apprized of the informa-

tion received at court, and the steps to which it had led, his haughty soul took fire ; and with a party of five hundred gallant cavaliers, all well mounted and armed, the firm friends and adherents of his illustrious house, and who had assembled for the purpose of aiding him, if necessary, in revenging the insult he had met with, he immediately set out for the convent, in order to rescue his son, should he unfortunately find him a prisoner, and thus prevent his hereditary enemies, the De Laras, from obtaining any triumph over him.

His joy at finding he had eluded the search made after him was unspeakable, not only as it saved him the painful necessity of opposing the commands of his sovereign, but as it furnished him with an opportunity of pointing out to him how he might immediately signalize himself.

A Moorish fleet had that day been seen shaping its course towards Seville ; in consequence of which the guards were doubled in every direction. The event justified the fears this measure implied ; towards dusk it was discovered entering the port, only waiting for the covert of the night to storm the city ; and all became a scene of immediate confusion there, troops pouring in from every quarter, and anxiety visible in every countenance.

For his son to take the lead in repelling the invaders, was the ardent wish of the marquis ; he proposed his immediately heading the gallant troop at their command, and either obtaining a glorious death in teaching their ancient enemies to yield, or else such a triumph as should appease the anger of the king, and perhaps obtain his interference with Elvina.

At the prospect of signalizing himself, of achieving some exploit which should add still greater lustre to his name, the soul of Ferdinand regained its wonted animation ; and quickly arming himself, he

was in a few minutes at the head of the gallant band which had accompanied his noble father to the forest. Nor did any thing, but the necessity he was under of being in attendance on the king at an early hour the ensuing morning, prevent his friend Don Julio from adding another to their number.

Olivia declined attending Elvina to court, fearful the scene she anticipated there would be too much for her feelings.

Pale as death, trembling with emotion, her fair face, half shaded from view by a mourning veil, and every look, every gesture indicative of the feelings under which she laboured, the beauteous heiress of Osma approached the presence, in which, besides the marquis Almeria, she found several illustrious friends of their respective houses assembled, in consequence of her intention being notified to the king.

"Oh, my liege!" kneeling before the throne, she cried, "from thee, from whom it never yet has been supplicated in vain, I ask for justice—avenge the death of my father—punish the audacious youth, who, in slaying him, insolently raised his hand against a life consecrated to your service."

"And by that deed avenged his own," said the marquis, firmly; "and for just resentment there's no punishment."

"Arise, my fair," cried the king, "your tears affect me—I bear an equal part in all your grief. If to know I sympathize in your sorrow can afford you any consolation, receive that assurance now. My lord," addressing himself to the marquis, "you in your turn shall be heard."

"Ah, sire!" exclaimed the afflicted Elvina, as she slowly obeyed him, and bursting into a fresh flood of tears, "I have nought to urge but vengeance—the blood of my father, that blood so often shed in your defence, cries aloud for it; let not such licentious

acts pass with impunity, or suffer that the bravest of your chiefs should meet their fate by the hand of rashness. If acts like these go unpunished, the ardour for your service soon will cool—you suffer by the loss of a brave chief—revenge that loss upon his foe—’tis not to me alone the sacrifice is due, ’tis due to yourself and kingdom.”

She paused, and drawing back a little, sought, by drawing her veil still further over her face, to hide the distraction of her soul.

“ Be of good cheer, my child,” said the king, “ for from this moment, behold in me a father and a king.” Then again turning towards the marquis—“ Now, my lord, I attend to you.”

“ Thrice blest is he,” cried the aged chief, advancing nearer to the throne, and laying his hand upon his bosom, “ whom fate reserves not to the verge of life, to feel, to generous minds that cruelest of all destinies, the loss of strength and power, to vindicate his honour and his wrongs. I, who acquired such glory in the field—I, to whose standard victory ever flew; behold me now reduced to bear such injuries as burns my cheek to think of—what battle, siege, nor ambuscade could do, nor all the power of Arragon and Grenada, nor all your enemies, nor all my foes, the duke committed just beneath your eyes—piqued at your choice, and vain of the advantage his youth had given over my feeble years. Thus sire, these hairs, grown white amidst alarms—this blood, so often streaming in your cause—this arm, the terror of my country’s foes, had all dishonoured sunk into the grave, had not heaven blessed me with a gallant son, worthy his country, worthy of his king, who lent his father’s wrongs his generous sword, redeemed our honour and effaced our shame. If to resent so daring an affront deserves to be considered as a crime, on me alone the punishment should fall,

since it was I who instigated him to it. If lady Elvina, to satisfy her suit, must have atonement for her father's blood, let me the sufferer, me the victim be—I'll die with pleasure since my honour's cleared."

The king was about replying to this speech, when a sudden and violent tumult without the palace prevented him—surprised, he commanded lady Elvina to be conducted to another apartment, while he sent to inquire the cause of this disturbance.

Equally impatient to learn it, the attendant who led lady Elvina from the presence, left her the moment he had shown her into another chamber. The tumult every moment increased; but the alarm it awakened in her bosom quickly subsided, since from the shouts that rent the vaulted skies, she was soon convinced it was not occasioned by any thing of an unpleasant nature. Her curiosity was excited; she unclosed a lattice; but, to her disappointment, found it opened into one of the private courts of the palace.

She listened still more attentively, and fancied she heard the name of Don Ferdinand pronounced with loud acclaims.

Trembling and confused, she dropped into a chair—"Is he then," she internally exclaimed, "the cause of this rejoicing? Oh how, or by what means, has he earned this applause?"

Her anxiety became intolerable—she looked eagerly towards the door, but for some time no one approached. At length it was flung open, and Don Julio rushed in all emotion.

"You have heard the glorious news?" cried he, in almost breathless accents.

"No," returned Elvina, but in a voice scarce articulate; "I have been alone since I quitted the presence chamber."

"But did you surmise nothing from the voices of the multitude? amid their acclamations did you

not distinguish the name of Don Ferdinand? did you not hear him called their guardian angel, their deliverer?"

"And how has he entitled himself to these appellations?" demanded Elvina with irrepressible eagerness.

"Oh! by emulating all the wonders of his ancestors, their greatness, as he had previously done their virtues; his praises echo through the city; his gallantry is the theme of every tongue. The Moorish fleet, which for some days past has been hovering on our coast, has been, through his means, annihilated. To their destruction, their disgrace, and his eternal fame, our ancient foes appeared before him—three hours of combat enabled him to gain a complete victory over them."

"And the king, what says the king on this occasion?" still more anxiously inquired Elvina.

"All I can inform you," evasively replied Don Julio, "is, that I left the marquis presenting to his majesty the chief of the captives made by the valour of his son, and supplicating forgiveness for him."

"He is safe then?" cried Elvina, falteringly, and losing in the idea the ashy paleness that had overspread her cheek.

"He lives," replied Don Julio, "but whether that is all," purposely affecting ignorance on the subject, to see how she would be affected, "I cannot pretend to say. But you change colour—surely it cannot be that you are interested in the fate of a person whose life you seek? Resume your composure, lady."

"Yes, and my resentment too," cried Elvina, recovering herself, and stung to the soul by this observation—"The public joy may stifle my complaints, and render unavailing all my efforts to avenge my father, but without causing me to be unmindful of my duty—no, these acclamations, in which I take no part, by

aggravating my anguish, render me but still more determined on seeking vengeance on the author of my wo."

" Well, madam, my business here was not to plead for him, but to reconduct you to the presence of his majesty," said Don Julio, presenting her his hand as he spoke.

Secretly approving the ardour which had hurried him on to revenge his father, though out of respect to himself, he deemed it requisite to evince some resentment for the disregard he had shown to his orders, the king was not sorry at being furnished with a pretext, by the splendid victory he had achieved, for taking Don Ferdinand again into favour.

Accordingly the marquis, his father, found no difficulty in obtaining an audience for him ; and yielding to the sentiments he had inspired, no sooner had he knelt before him, than extending his hand to him, and making him rise—

" Heir of a line," he cried, " which generous heroes fill, the help and glory of Castile, where shall I find encomiums and rewards sufficiently great, to testify my sense of your merits ? Your country saved from a rude hostile band ; the Moors defeated, ere I had well given orders to repel them, are such deeds as make a monarch poor, and beggar me in hope as well as power."

" Ah, spare me, sire !" returned the noble youth, " the confusion of hearing my feeble services so over-rated : I know too well a virtuous subject's part, not to know, that to shed my blood freely in my country's cause, is but to fulfill a duty too obvious to merit applause."

" Such sentiments are worthy of the heart from whence they spring," rejoined his sovereign. " All serve me not with thy distinguished zeal, and valour must be carried to excess, ere it meet with unparal-

leled success. Permit my praises then and let me hear at large what as yet I have received but an imperfect account of."

"Know then, my liege, at that important hour, when the town trembled at the thoughts of an invasion, a band of chosen friends repaired to me, to solicit me to head them against our common enemies. Pardon, sire, my embarking in the glorious enterprise without authority; but danger pressed—besides, I knew I had incurred your displeasure, and, if doomed to fall, preferred to perish combatting for you."

"Such warmth excuses your offence," interrupted the king; "the state defended speaks in your behalf—henceforward, therefore, I only listen to Elvina, to dry her tears and mitigate her pain. But to proceed."

"I marched this chosen band," resumed Don Ferdinand, "against the foe; but ere we reached the shore, our members were encreased three thousand more—a part of these I hid on board the ships, the rest on their arms lay at my side: I then withdrew the guards from their stations, feigning those orders I received from you. At length the glimmering stars revealed to us the Moorish fleet of five-and-thirty sail making for the beach, the heaving tides now favouring their design. Secure we were surprised, and in idea already sacking the town. We favoured the deceit, until the last of all their host had passed the ambuscade, then like a torrent rushed upon their rear, while in their front appeared our steady troops. Attacked on every side, encompassed by their foes, the sands ran crimsoned with their gore: returning light rendered them fully sensible of their defeat; confused they ran, striving their ships to gain, their princes in vain endeavouring to rally them, and who soon perceiving all hope of escape over, sullenly de-

manded the adverse chief, and into my hand resigned their swords, which with humility I place in thine."

"And in return," cried the king, with a smiling aspect, "I stand your friend with Elvina."

Don Ferdinand started at her name. The king, perceiving his emotion, repeated the assurance he had just given—"But in order to expedite, or rather render successful my efforts to serve you," he continued, "it is necessary to obtain some proof of the regard she entertains for you."

Accordingly, on learning she approached, he desired him to retire into another apartment; then addressing her as she drew near—"Well, my fair," he cried, "be satisfied—dry up your tears—let the fate of Don Ferdinand expiate his offence—he has conquered our enemies, but, 'tis at the expense of his life. In the very lap of victory, he dies of the wounds received in the combat—but you tremble."

"Tremble" inwardly, repeated the heart-stricken Elvina, "Oh God!" in agony she exclaimed, her eyes closed, and like a blighted flower she sunk against the shoulder of Don Julio.

Some time elapsed ere she showed any symptoms of returning animation. On recovering, overwhelmed with grief and confusion, she would instantly have withdrawn, but was prevented by the king.

His feelings would not permit him to continue the deception longer—besides, it had already answered the end for which it was intended; gradually, therefore, he retracted what he had said, assuring her Ferdinand was neither in danger, nor forgetful of the vows he had plighted to her.

To describe what Elvina felt on this occasion would be impossible; shame, anger, and resentment, alike pervaded her bosom—the anguish imparted by

the imposition was, if possible, surpassed by the indignation its acknowledgment excited.

Shocked at the idea of being supposed capable of retaining an attachment for him by whose hand her noble father had fallen, of being convicted of weakness the most degrading, at the very moment she was aspiring to a character of exalted firmness, and thus of being exposed to ridicule, contempt, and scorn, she indirectly attempted to deny her recent emotion being owing to the cause to which it was imputed.

"What!" she demanded, with a cheek flushed by agitation, "do we not swoon with joy as well as grief?—have not each their tears?—does not excess of pleasure as well as excess of pain, overwhelm the soul, and rob us of our senses?"

The king shook his head incredulously, "Ah, my fair! shall we impossibilities believe?" he said.

"I find then," cried Elvina, with tears streaming from her, "my afflictions ne'er must cease. In what way have I proved myself inconsistent and wavering, that I should now be accused of this degrading weakness?"

"My child," interrupted the king, "resentment here too far prevails; let justice hold the scales before the sword—your father was the aggressor, gave the offence; equity then pleads in defence of Don Ferdinand. Consult your heart, and if candid and sincere, you'll own, I am sure, he reigns triumphant there, and secretly applaud the tenderness, that saves the state their chief, and you your love."

Elvina possessed too much of the hereditary spirit of her ancestors, calmly to listen to an insinuation calculated, in her opinion, to throw a lasting obloquy on her. Her frame trembled with increasing agitation, and the indignation it excited sparkled in her eyes.

"For me the destroyer of my father spare!" she

exclaimed, “ the author of my woes ! Ah, my sire ! is it then thought sufficient to hear my sorrow, but not afford it any relief—to listen to my suit, but not redress me ? But, since refused the justice I demand, I must appeal to arms against my foe. My fame, my promise to my dying father, demand my doing so—it was by the sword Don Ferdinand accomplished his revenge, by the same weapon mine shall be obtained. From all the courtiers I'll demand his life, and recompense it with my heart and hand.”

Confounded by an obduracy so little expected, the king for some minutes could only gaze on her in silence ; then—“ in this business, lady,” he cried, “ I must interfere—these laws of honour, so long practised in Spain, drain it of its choicest blood, and often by deplorable success favour the guilty ; for Don Ferdinand, therefore, I dispense with them, since I must plainly tell you the flying Moors atoned for his offence.”

“ What, sire !” exclaimed the agitated marquis, stepping forward, “ reverse the sacred laws of honour for Ferdinand's sake ! No, no, it must not be ; what would the nation say, if, pusillanimous, he should submit to such a measure ? refuse his timid hand to honour's call, and plead, to screen his life, his king's command !”

“ Well, my Lord, since you demand the combat for your son, I acquiesce : but on this condition, that he fights but one ; for no sooner should one antagonist bleed, than another would supply his place, the prize the lady Elvina holds to view being but too well calculated of every courtier to make a foe. Then, lady,” addressing himself to her, “ choose your champion ; but after this, expect no further indulgence ; and remember, that in the victor you behold your husband.”

“ Open the lists—that champion then am I !” ex-

claimed Don Rodolph, who, being in attendance on the king, was also present ; " the boasted valour, the arm of Don Ferdinand, I defy, if (with a low obeisance to) lady Elvina permits that honour to my sword."

" What say you, lady ?" demanded the king ; " do you entrust your quarrel to his hand ?"

Elvina falteringly answered in the affirmative..

" To-morrow then let the combat take place."

" My liege, eagerly cried the marquis Almeria, " on my son's account, let it not be delayed a minute—the ready hand obeys the willing heart."

" No," returned the king ; " to permit it now, after the fatigue he has gone through, would be to give his antagonist an unfair advantage over him. Nature demands some hours of rest ; and since the bloody business I can't prevent, I at least insist on its not taking place till the time I have appointed. Do you," turning to Don Julio, and another Lord in waiting, " be present at the combat ; and when decided, let the conqueror be conducted to me, that from my hand he may receive lady Elvina, whose presence I desire at an early hour on the morrow at court, as a recompense for all his pain."

" Oh, sire !" now burst in agony from the quivering lips of Elvina, at the idea of the fate that perhaps awaited her.

" Nay, murmur not," rejoined the king, " the conditions are of your own making—if Ferdinand conquers, you'll have no cause of complaint ; but whether he does or not, in the victor you assuredly meet your husband."

Elvina hid her face in her veil, and prepared to depart. With the exulting air of gratified vanity, a cheek flushed with the triumph he had already obtained over Don Ferdinand, in being allowed the honour of becoming her champion, Don Rodolph

tempted to lead her to her carriage, but involuntarily shrinking from him, she gave her hand to Don Julio, whom the king had commanded to conduct her to it, and who obeyed in silence, ignorant at her conduct towards his beloved friend.

Cloudy
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CHAP. XI.

Some solitary cloister will I choose,
And there with holy virgins live immured.

DRYDEN.

HAD Don Julio, however, been able to look into her heart, he would rather have pitied than condemned her, so great was the anguish she endured at the thoughts of the danger to which she had exposed Don Ferdinand. Every moment decked him with new charms in her eyes—the glory he had just acquired rendered him still more interesting to her, and the more she revolved the provocation he had received from the duke, the more justifiable appeared his conduct.

“Would it not have been sufficient,” she involuntarily exclaimed, “to have interdicted our union, not have compelled me to promise to pursue him unrelentingly? yet having that promise, I am bound to keep it, in order to avoid incurring the imputation of being still attached to him. Oh, my father! what misery has your fatal quarrel entailed upon me!”

The anxious Olivia listened with regret to the recital she gave her—she deemed Don Ferdinand deserving of forgiveness, and could not help greatly condemning her for not having availed herself of the pretext with which the king had furnished her for pardoning him—“Beware,” she cried, unused to disguise her sentiments, “lest Heaven, offended with such inflexibility, should take the side you least wish,

and permit your champion to conquer. Must you have loss on loss, and death on death?—will Ferdinand's blood restore your father's life?"

"Cease, cease, Olivia," returned the weeping Elvina, "to augment my misery—instead of thus aggravating, rather try to sooth it by your sympathy, for alas! I have nothing to hope, but all to fear—no ray of comfort, no glimpse of hope my anguish to allay. I behold either my father unrevenged, or lover slain. Can any destiny be more severe, forced to espouse the object of my anger or my hate?"

"Why then incur such a one, by disregarding the wishes of the king, and all that has been urged in defence of Don Ferdinand?"

"What would the world say, should I not avenge my father?"

"Nothing," replied Olivia, "did it know what I do."

"What you do!" repeated Elvina, with quickness, and looking earnestly at her; "why know you aught that can release me from so sacred an obligation?"

"Question me not," cried Olivia, with a look of embarrassment; "my tears and prayers have hitherto been unsuccessful; and all I could further urge on the subject would, I make no doubt, be equally so. Heaven grant the issue of to-morrow's combat may be as you wish! if not, I tremble to think of the misery you must suffer, at being compelled to insult the manes of the noble Ferdinand, by giving your hand to him who slew—"

"My hand to him!" exclaimed Elvina, with a look of horror; "oh, never, never! No," suddenly starting from her seat, and throwing herself on her knees, "I swear no person on earth shall ever force me to become the bride of Don Randolph."

Ere the words had well escaped her lips, Zelim, her Moorish page, who, from an adjoining apartment, had overheard the whole of what had passed, rushed forward, and throwing himself on his knees beside her, seized her clasped hands in his, and holding them up to heaven—"Repeat the oath," he cried, with lips trembling with emotion, and eyes wildly rolling in his head, "again swear not to let any circumstance induce you to become the wife of Don Rodolph."

Elvina, forcing her hands from him, rose from the floor in silent astonishment. He followed her, and clinging to her robe—"Ah, you hesitate!" he exclaimed; "your resolution falters!"

"No," returned his beauteous mistress; "but why should you be interested in my not becoming Don Rodolph's?"

"Because—because," replied Zelim, after a momentary hesitation, "I know you do not love him, and therefore I should be sorry you were either overpersuaded, or forced to marry him."

"And is that the only reason?" asked Elvina.

"What other should I have?" he replied; "must not this heart be lost to every sense of gratitude, if not deeply interested in your fate; for how great are the obligations I owe you! Poor and destitute, when the canopy of heaven was my only covering, and the bare earth my resting place, without a friend to speak in my behalf, nor say I merited your pity, did you not take me under your protection?"

"Well, my kind Zelim, believe me, I shall not," giving him her hand as she spoke, "forget this proof of your concern for my happiness; sorrow can never so entirely absorb me, as to cause me to overlook any instance of attachment: but retire, and endeavour to compose yourself, for your countenance is wild and haggard."

Zelim, respectfully kissing her hand, obeyed, lea-

wing her deeply impressed with the regard he had manifested for her. Some months had now elapsed since she had received him beneath her roof. As she was sitting one evening at a lattice, she heard the voice of distress beneath it, a voice to which her heart had never been inattentive, and looking out, beheld a boy weeping bitterly ; she inquired the cause of his affliction, and was informed he was a young Moor from Grenada, where he had been brought up as an orphan, till of an age to comprehend his misfortunes ; when informed that during his infancy his parents were taken in a voyage they had occasion to make by the Spaniards, and brought captive to Seville, he directly formed the resolution of repairing to that city, for the purpose of endeavouring to ascertain their fate, and, if still living, sharing their captivity ; but on his arriving there, had the grief to find they had some years before paid the debt of nature. Accordingly, he was on his way back to his native kingdom, when overpowered by the hardships he had gone through, his journey having been undertaken without any means of rendering it easy, he had been compelled to pause beneath the castle walls, where, spite of his efforts to prevent them, his tears burst forth at the thoughts of his forlorn situation.

Elvina scarcely waited to hear the conclusion of this pity-moving tale, ere she offered him her protection, an offer which he gladly accepted ; and finding he excelled in many accomplishments, particularly that of music, appointed him one of her pages, and daily became more pleased with him.

But nothing could long detach her thoughts from her present sorrows : the idea of the approaching combat harrowed up her soul. Involuntarily she addressed Heaven in behalf of her Ferdinand—" But, oh, spirit of my father !" she cried, " be not offended at this supplication—I wish him not to conquer, but

to live—no, 'tis my hope that neither conquer—then from both I am free.”

But whether this should be the case or not, she resolved on refusing her hand alike to both, resolved on retiring to a convent, and there passing the remainder of her days—a blighting frost had fallen on all her hopes, and the world could offer nothing to her view, to make amends for the happiness she had lost.

At length, overpowered by anxiety and fatigue, she threw herself on a couch in a remote apartment. The evening was by this time advanced; the gilded lattices of the room, commanding the rich woods that intervened between the river and the building, were all thrown open to admit the air, perfumed with the delicious fragrance of the orange and the lemon, that glowing through the green their lighter blended, and gave full to her view the pavilion where she had first seen Don Ferdinand, now burnished with the rays of the setting sun.

She could not behold it without emotion; lost in the painfully pleasing recollections it revived, she became abstracted from surrounding objects, until roused from her reverie by some one gently taking the hand which lay carelessly on her lap, while the other supported her head as she leaned against the arm of the couch—when starting from her reclining attitude, she beheld, to her unutterable surprise and agitation, Don Ferdinand kneeling beside her, and Olivia retreating from the room.

“What! Don Ferdinand again in my palace!” she exclaimed. Then attempting to pass him, she called aloud to Olivia, in accents which intimated her deeply resenting her having introduced him to her.

“Nay, chide her not for having yielded to the dictates of compassion,” cried the agitated Ferdinand, starting from the ground, and throwing himself between her and the door; “I knelt to implore her to

obtain me another opportunity of seeing you—but think not, Madam, I wished it for the purpose of pleading my unhappy passion, or deprecating your resentment—no, it was merely to take a parting view of all I loved : I solicited it, to bid a last adieu, to entreat your forgiveness for all the pain I've caused you, and lay my life in humble homage at your feet.”

“ Die !” almost unconsciously repeated the trembling Elvina, losing, in the sensation these words, excited, all power to fly him ; “ is it then decreed that in this combat Ferdinand should fall ?”

“ Yes, it is only thus I can appease your resentment, and satisfying that, I shall die without a groan.”

“ You bespeak, then, your adversary’s victory,” said Elvina, reproachfully ; “ is he so mighty, then, that your past exploits afford no hope of being able to contend with him ? Methinks the conqueror of our foes should fear no arm !”

“ ’Tis not to combat but to death I run,” replied Ferdinand ; I shall not strive to avoid what you inflict—I dread neither the failure of my courage or my arm, but against your wishes I cannot exert either. Sick of life, since deprived of the hope of calling you mine, I had voluntarily courted death in the affair of last night, but that my king and country demanded my sword, and such interests my soul could not betray ; but to-morrow the case will be widely different—I shall then be engaged solely on my own account, and aware of your having demanded my life; shall not defend what you require, nor against him to whose hands you have committed your cause, uplift my arm. No, to him, on your account, I owe such deference, that against his weapon I will not guard my breast, but adore, in his, your hand by which I fall.”

“ Oh, Heavens !” exclaimed Elvina, with wildness, “ is every moment to augment my sufferings ? Oh,

why, why have I been doomed to act a part so contrary to my nature, Ferdinand?" she continued, unconsciously resting her hand upon his arm. "Though for your life you may make no resistance, yet think, ah, think, for glory's sake, what will the world say, ignorant as it is of the motives that render you careless of your safety, should it hear of your being vanquished!"

"Our enemies' overthrow," replied Ferdinand, "has sufficiently proved my valour; after such victories, I fear no imputation on my sword—I have shown the world what I the dearest prize, that there is no sacrifice I would not make to honour. In this combat, therefore, when I fall, instead of my courage being questioned, it will only be said that he adored Elvina, and would not live to cause her pain, submitted to the rigor of his fate, nor would refuse the life which she demanded, preferred to die, since in her breast he could not reign, and to her will resigned himself. So shall my glory be brightened by my death—so shall I prove, by yielding to this blow what to you I owe and love! But I will no longer intrude upon you," he continued; "I have seen you again; I have been permitted at your feet to acknowledge my resignation to your will, and I am satisfied. Adieu then, oh! most lovely and beloved, thou whose idea hast never for an instant been absent from me since I saw thee. Ere this hour, to-morrow, Ferdinand shall have atoned for his offence, and thy resentment be superseded by generous pity; yes, I know thy generous nature too well, not to feel assured my death will subdue thy enmity; with my last sigh, will prayers for thy felicity mingle! Happy mayst thou be," in a voice of impassioned devotion, he cried, and gently raising to his lips, and for a moment pressing them to it, the fair hand which she had unconsciously rested on his arm, "happy as, had it been the will of

heaven to have blessed me with thee, it would have been my fond study to have rendered thee ! Oh, Elvina ! in that world where the secrets of all hearts are known, you will be fully sensible I merited not your resentment—but I came not hither to plead, but to bid farewell.” Then letting drop her hand, he was rushing from the room, when Elvina calling upon him to stop, arrested his steps.

“ What would Elvina, what would the arbitress of my fate say ? ” he cried, again approaching her.

“ Nothing,” returned Elvina, recovering herself, and with an averted countenance waving him from her. But he was not to be so repulsed—he saw the struggles of her soul, and involuntarily cast himself at her feet.

“ And does our unhappy attachment claim not one sigh ? ” he demanded, in emphatic accents.

Elvina strove to exert herself, but in vain ; all her resolution forsook her, as her eyes again encountered his, for never, never had he appeared so interestingly lovely. A ray of the setting sun shone full upon his face, his dark locks floated carelessly on his neck, his soul was pictured in his countenance, and overcome by the feelings he had excited, she sunk half fainting against his shoulder, as he hastily arose to support her sinking frame.

“ Oh, Ferdinand ! ” in faltering accents she at last exclaimed, a voice true to the emotions of her soul, “ since neither life nor honour can persuade you to resist Don Rodolph, if Elvina is indeed dear to you, defend yourself, or I am the sacrifice—guard your life, if but to free me from that hard condition, which gives me to your hated conqueror. If any sparks of passion yet remain, leave that field victor where Elvina’s the prize—conquer, if it be only for my sake.”

“ Conquer ! ” repeated the enraptured Ferdinand ;

"oh ! what a motive hast thou given me to do so ! Yes, it shall now be seen what I'll achieve to gain Elvina."

Covered with confusion, Elvina withdrew from his supporting arms, and peremptorily insisted on his leaving her, fearful if she tarried longer, she might be betrayed into some further proof of tenderness.

He at length reluctantly obeyed her leaving her a prey to the most acute anguish. The false hope which she had given him filled her with remorse and regret, since decided against giving him her hand : " but what I refuse to thee, another shall never possess !" she passionately exclaimed. " No, Ferdinand, since obliged to give thee up, I relinquish the world—already my tortured soul longs for the gloom and solitude of a convent, for the living death of the cloistered votaries, in which, if there is nothing to warm with rapture, there is nothing to chill with anguish."

The night was passed in prayer. The morning found her at an early hour preparing for her departure to Seville. The sun shone forth with splendour—through the rich and waving woods, the river was seen sparkling in its beams—the flowers, refreshed by the dews of night, exhaled the choicest odours—the birds, with joyful carols, hailed the new-born day—all was gay and lovely, calculated to charm and delight.

But Nature in vain presents her beauties to the heart steeped in anguish—no ray can enliven the soul involved in the gloom of sorrow. The afflicted Elvina was insensible of the brightness of the sun, the music of the woods, beheld nothing in the kindling azure and the mountain's brow, illuminated with fluid gold, but the dull dawn of the day that was to decide her fate. Oppressed even beyond the power of shedding tears, she entered her carriage, and on alighting at the palace, was ushered into a remote apartment,

where, for a considerable time, she was left to herself. What she suffered during this interval of suspense, may easier be conceived than described—a thousand times, under the agony it inflicted, she was on the point of rushing from the apartment to seek for information, but as often was deterred by shame and delicacy.

At length steps approached it—her heart throbbed as it would burst her bosom. In a few moments the door was flung open, and Don Julio rushed in, followed by the hated Rodolph with a blood-stained sword.

At this sight, Elvina for some minutes lost in insensibility all consciousness of misery. On recovering, she clasped her hands in agony, and casting her eyes despairingly round the room, beheld Don Rodolph standing beside her. Instantly shrinking back with a look of horror, she motioned him from her.

"First, Madam," he cried, interpreting her look, "permit me to lay this weapon at your feet."

Elvina uttered a faint shriek—"What, covered with the blood of Ferdinand!" she exclaimed; "perfidious wretch! you have slain the being I adored! Oh, Ferdinand! ill-fated and beloved, my father avenged, my duty proved, I may now, without any imputation on my fame, avow my passion for thee."

"Good Heaven!" demanded the haughty Rodolph, impatiently, "what mean these exclamations?"

"Hence, away!" continued she, "you have acted an assassin's part—you must have taken him by surprise, or he never could have fallen by such a hand as thine. Oh! why did I permit thee to become my champion! Oh! why by not openly avowing the disdain thy officious offer excited, prevent thee robbing me of the life I held most dear!"

"What strange infatuation this!" resentfully as well as passionately interrupted Don Rodolph; "yet hear me speak."

"What, to boast of your exploit ! your triumph over Don Ferdinand ! Oh, never, never!"

"Don Julio shall attend to you," addressing himself to him.

"Excuse me," returned Don Julio ; "I have nothing to say, but that by the command of his Majesty, I must conduct her to his presence."

"Oh, Heavens ! and does he persevere in his cruel determination ? But no matter—after the trial I have just sustained, what other can I dread ?" Then giving him her hand, with a look of settled despair, she permitted him to lead her to the presence-chamber.

At the foot of the throne she knelt, and raising her eyes to the king—"Oh ! my liege," she cried, "you see before you the veriest wretch on earth ; yet, miserable as I am, 'tis in your power to aggravate my wretchedness, by continuing inexorable to my solicitations. Dissimulation is no longer necessary ; I may now freely speak the language of my heart. Never did the attachment Don Ferdinand inspired know abatement, though the duty I owed my father compelled me to appear his foe ; but, since his death has expiated his offence, I can no longer hide it : think then what I must suffer, if with a heart occupied by his image, overwhelmed with anguish for his loss, I should be urged to give my hand to another ; and, in pity, revoke the cruel law which destines me to the arms of his rival : permit that in the gloom of a cloister I bury the sorrows of my heart, and quit a world which has no longer any charms for me."

"And has Don Rodolph informed you he overcame Don Ferdinand ?" demanded the King, with something of sternness in his manner.

"Oh, sire ! how unnecessary !—that blood-stained sword," shuddering as her eyes again involuntarily glanced at it, "sufficiently informed me."

"Sire, allow me to speak," said Don Rodolph, stepping forward; "it was the impatience of the Lady Elvina, and not any false assertion of mine, that led her into error; she would not suffer me to explain that it was at the desire of Don Ferdinand I appeared before her, to lay at her feet the sword, which, on disarming me, he had the generosity to return, saying, he would rather the victory should remain doubtful, than further shed the blood that was ventured for Elvina; but that as his duty called him to the presence of his sovereign, he requested I might lay it in-humble homage at her feet. Deceived by my appearance, transports of anger, and despairing love, so inflamed her against me, that in vain I entreated to be heard."

"He lives then!" now faintly articulated the astonished Elvina. The sudden transition from despair to joy was too much for her exhausted spirits to support, and again she sunk beneath her feelings.

Her insensibility was of short duration; on recovering—"Nothing now remains," said the King, "but that I perfect your happiness and Don Ferdinand's, by giving you to one another.—Blush not, my child," he added, "at the discovery of your virtuous flame; there is no cause to keep it secret now; in every light, you've proved yourself superior—established your fame, by your filial piety—and hushed contending passion to peace, by the reconciliation of your love and duty. Nought, therefore, as I have just observed, remains, but that from the hand of your sovereign, you receive that faithful lover, who, both by his submission to your will, and the splendour of his achievements, has proved himself so worthy of your regard: let him approach, and from me receive the beauteous prize allotted to him."

As he spoke, the folding doors of an inner apartment were thrown open, and Don Ferdinand came

forward, magnificently attired, his youthful cheek flushed with reviving hope, his dark eyes sparkling with anticipated happiness.

"Happy am I," said the King, "whenever an opportunity offers for rewarding transcendent merit. Don Ferdinand," taking the hand of his lovely mistress, and presenting it to him, "in giving you this, I give you the only reward I could have found adequate to your merit."

"Oh, sire ! how infinitely does the reward exceed that merit!" cried the enraptured youth ; "but it shall be my study to prove myself deserving of it : and now permit that I pay my respects where my heart is already tied in homage." Then throwing himself at the feet of his agitated mistress—"I came not here," he cried, in the most deprecating accents, "to plead my own deserts, but again to offer you my life, without attempting to bring into question the right of conquest, or the order of the King ; if all that has been already done is not deemed sufficient to satisfy you—say," he continued, with trembling apprehension, on observing in her countenance an expression inimical to his wishes, "if still unappeased, what you require ? With a thousand rivals must I contend, or to the poles extend my victories ; must armies perish by my single arm ; must I exceed the fictions of romance, I'll undertake it all to merit you. Yet not in this way exercise your power—if on my death resolved, let your own hand inflict the blow ; to your will I resign myself ; but when for my offence I have paid the debt—when in the tomb this throbbing heart is laid, do not forget your glory or my fate ; but say, when you commisserate it—"Oft did he prove his passion and his value, and had not perished if he had not loved."

Trembling with emotion, subdued to forgiveness, yet withheld from extending it, by her sense of rigid

duty, Elvina for a minute remained silent ; then motioning him to rise—"After what has past, to deny the interest I take in your fate, would I know be ridiculous," she cried : "but that interest cannot induce me to act contrary to my sense of propriety. I acknowledge you entitled to the esteem and admiration of your country ; but this acknowledgment is all you can hope to obtain from me ; filial piety will not allow that I unite my destiny with thine, and in my father's ashes soil my hand."

"That piety has already been sufficiently proved," interposed the King, "to prevent any imputation falling on you, for accepting the addresses of Don Ferdinand ; virtue must wear the features of humanity, to obtain regard : remember the conditions on which I submitted to the recent combat ; I now insist on their fulfilment—insist, because I know no other way in which I can reward the heroic valour of Don Ferdinand, or manifest the anxiety I feel for the happiness of the fair Elvina ; his, lady, you are by right of conquest; from this moment, therefore, consider him as your destined lord: this much, out of respect to your delicacy, I agree to, that though in the field he won you, his bliss shall be delayed, till the period of mourning for your deceased father be expired ; meantime shall he immortalize his name, by continuing the career he has commenced, and by his glory justify your passion."

"Oh, sire!" exclaimed the enraptured youth, "blest in the idea of calling Elvina mine, and impelled by your command, what mortal power shall be able to withstand this arm?—But, ah! may I indeed flatter myself," again throwing himself at her feet, "that the beauteous Elvina will at last be induced to listen to my suit?"

"Rise, Don Ferdinand," she cried ; "that posture ill becomes you, to one commanded to consider you as her future lord."

Led from these words to believe she acquiesced in the wishes of the King, the transports of Ferdinand were unutterable, and participated in by all present; all united in congratulating the interesting pair, on the supposed happy termination of their sufferings: but the sighing heart of Elvina disclaimed these congratulations—trembling from conflicting feelings—confused at beholding every eye fastened on her, she desired permission to retire, and was conducted to her carriage by the exulting Ferdinand: eagerly he entreated to be allowed to hasten after her to her palace, for the purpose of giving vent, at her feet, to the fullness of his heart, and receiving from her lips a confirmation of his present happiness; but she peremptorily refused seeing him for a few days, convinced she should not sooner be able to recover herself sufficiently to come to the decisive explanation she intended with him.

So ambiguous was the expression of her countenance, owing to the contradictory feelings of her mind, her happiness at the safety of Ferdinand, yet grief at their eternal separation, that Olivia, who anxiously watched her return, was unable to conjecture the issue of the combat. But from her painful suspense concerning it, she was soon relieved by Elvina; as briefly as agitation would permit, she informed her of all that had happened; but the pleasure imparted by the recital to the affectionate heart of Olivia, was quickly damped by the avowal of her determination not to become the bride of Don Ferdinand. “No,” she cried, “nature and filial piety forbid our union; the obstacles to it are not to be overcome; neither the love or esteem I bear him, nor the consideration of his hand being raised against my father but in defence of his own, can prevent me from recoiling with horror, at the idea of becoming his, imbrued as his sword is with the blood of him *who gave me being!*”

"Oh, no, no!" passionately exclaimed Olivia, "he is guiltless of that blood :" then recollecting herself, owing to the look of astonishment which Elvina gave her at these words—"Imaginary obstacles," in a calmer tone, she added, "only exist to your union ; sacrifice not to them your happiness."

"Ah! my dear Olivia, I almost wish I could view the offence of Ferdinand in the light which you do—but it will not be ; methinks the pale and bleeding shade of my father continually stands before me, to remind me of the deed ; persecute me not therefore with arguments, which must prove unavailing."

Thus entreated, the zealous advocate of Don Ferdinand ceased for the present to importune her further on the subject ; and at the approach of night, Elvina repaired, by herself to the convent, to pour forth her soul in prayer and thanksgiving, for the happy issue of the dreaded combat.

All was silent and solitary, and the solemnity of the scene was well calculated to heighten her present feelings. Vespers were long over—the church was entirely deserted—and of the numerous lights that at the hour of evening prayer had shed a second day throughout the sacred edifice, but a few scattered ones, upon different altars, now remained, and which but partially dissipating its gloom, left imagination at large to magnify its grandeur and awful magnificence.

Elvina was about prostrating herself before an altar, when the sight of a female, starting from the attitude she was on the point of assuming, prevented her ; her surprise was heightened to something like superstitious terror, when, after gazing at her for a moment, through the folds of a mourning veil that covered her person, the stranger, extending a fair but emaciated hand, motioned to her to retire.

She wished to fly, but had not power ; a sensation she had never before experienced rivetted her feet to

the pavement ; she was soon, however, restored to the use of her suspended faculties. A distant door was heard to open, and starting at the sound—“ Fly !” cried the stranger, in the wild accents of apprehension, “ fly, if you do not wish to occasion murder ; another hour shall explain all that now appears mysterious.”

Elvina did not need the repetition of this entreaty ; she hastily regained the crateny ; but, instead of instantly passing through it, involuntarily paused on reaching it, and, looking down into the church, thro’ one of the arches, beheld, by the pale gleaming of his armour, in the faint ray that illumined the place, a knight, completely armed, advancing towards the spot she had just quitted ; she would have continued to watch him, but that, on approaching the oratory, she fancied he paused, and looked upwards with a threatening air. This was sufficient to make her retreat ; she found Olivia in the apartment in which she had left her, and briefly acquainted her with the cause of her quick return.

Olivia agreed with her in thinking it a most extraordinary affair, nor could avoid wishing its development. After some time past in discoursing of it, mindful of the extreme fatigue which lady Elvina had gone through, she proposed her retiring to rest, a proposal which the exhausted frame of Elvina prevented her opposing ; accordingly they repaired to her chamber, and at the door were separating, when a shriek from the apartment of Zelim, at the extremity of the gallery communicating with it, occasioned their hastening thither, and bursting open the door, they beheld a man escaping by the window, and a female, whom, at the first glance, Elvina perceived to be the same she had seen in the chapel, extended on the floor, in a state of insensibility. They raised her between them, and her veil being removed, beheld a

youthful countenance of extreme beauty. Placing her on a couch, they exerted themselves to recover her ; and while administering to her relief, Elvina was struck with her astonishing likeness, notwithstanding the difference of their complexions, to Zelim. This circumstance, united to that of finding her in his chamber, and several others which occurred at the moment to recollection, instantly led to a belief of having been imposed on, of seeing in the fair stranger and her page Zelim, one and the same person, a belief in which she was confirmed, when, after gazing alternately at her and Olivia for a few minutes after her recovery, the beauteous stranger, suddenly rising from her couch, threw herself at her feet, and, in the very accents of Zelim, implored her to have pity on her.

"Prove yourself deserving of it," returned Elvina, endeavouring to collect herself, "and doubt not obtaining it; be candid in explaining the motives which led to the disguise you adopted, for you can no longer hide from me, you and Zelim being the same."

"I mean not to attempt it," replied the fair suppliant; beyond the present night it was not my intention to have had a concealment from you: my heart shall be opened to your view, and if, after hearing my confession, you shall still deem me deserving of some little degree of commiseration, I shall not think myself utterly miserable."

"Rise," cried Elvina; I am impatient for your story; and be assured, you are about revealing your errors to a person, too sensible of her own imperfections, not to show indulgence to those of others; only let me be convinced they proceed not from wilful perverseness, and every consolation which compassion and sympathy can afford, shall be yours."

"The other bowed her head, in token of gratitude and obedience; then rising, she took, as motioned, a seat on the couch, and with Elvina at one side, and Olivia at the other, commenced her story as follows:-

“ My name is Dorinda—my origin noble ; but the unfortunate part which my family took in the cause of Pedro, by depriving them of their possessions, left me without aught but a name to boast of. My father, the count de Medina, fell with his deposed sovereign, at Monteil ; his estates were seized, and the countess, my mother, heart-broken by his loss, and the change in her fortunes, survived him but long enough to bring me into this changeful scene. Her last moments were cheered by the kindness of the marquis Almeria, the friend of my father’s early years, and who, though of the opposite party, too liberal to allow public feuds to interfere with private friendship, sought her out in the miserable asylum to which she had fled, and faithfully promised to take me under his protection—a promise he most religiously observed.

“ I was brought up in a convent—when of an age to be allowed a choice, my generous patron informed me, that if not inclined to the veil, I should no longer be immured within a convent, but immediately placed under the care of a lady, who would usher me into life in a manner becoming my birth. I eagerly caught at this offer : that love of variety inherent in youth—the delusive colours in which it paints the world, all made me eagerly embrace it. Inconsiderate that I was, what had I to do in a world from which fate had removed all those to whom I had a right to look up for support and kindness ! How often have I since repented the rashness that made me do so—how often regretted the tranquillity of the cloister—the pensive calm enjoyed within its ~~holy~~ walls !

“ But, to be brief, I was removed to the ancient castle of the dutchess of Terazona, in Old Castile, my future protectress, and nearly related to the marquis of Almeria : but never were two beings more

dissimilar in point of disposition—one was all benevolence, the other ostentation ; without possessing the smallest particle of sensibility, the dutchess aspired to be thought a person of the most refined feelings ; and, from the extreme plausibility of her manner, succeeded in being considered so by all not immediately in her power. Scarcely had the marquis left me with her, ere I discovered her real disposition—discovered that not out of any regard to him, or pity for me, but solely to gratify her wish for the reputation of benevolence, she had taken me under her protection.

“ Satisfied, from the light in which she knew he regarded her, that she should be able to make the marquis believe what she pleased, she had no hesitation in treating me with the tyranny natural to her, doing every thing in her power, by continually irritating my temper, to try and make me appear unamiable, in order to heighten the merit of her supposed kindness to me.

“ Whether she succeeded in these efforts, I shall not pretend to say ; but certain it is, she succeeded, by the example she set them, in causing me to be treated, both by her domestics and visiters, with the most insulting neglect.

“ The conviction, however, of being unattended to by the marquis, could I have brought myself to make any complaints of my situation, deterred me from the measure, intolerable as it was, and though every day rendered it still more insupportable.

“ But though I could refrain from complaints, I could not support my spirits sufficiently to prevent a deep melancholy from taking possession of my heart ; I drooped beneath the soul-chilling idea of being a being insulated, as it were, from the rest of society—a cypher in the great account—a creature that, like a weed of the field, might perish from the face of the

earth, without any person inquiring into her fate, one eye shedding a tear for her.

" An object of either neglect or cruelty, I had no enjoyment, but what was derived from cultivating the accomplishments I was possessed of, or wandering in the romantic environs of the castle. I had naturally a taste for the beauties of nature, and the melancholy that fastened on me, rendered it every day more prevalent: while wandering amid woods and thickets, tasting the freshness of the air, enjoying the luxury and calm of nature, listening to the warblings of birds, and the soft murmurs of limpid waters, I sometimes forgot the anxieties of my situation—sometimes lost all sense of its unpleasantries, in those delicious reveries that steal us from ourselves.

" For a person of a romantic turn, nothing could be more delightful than the situation of the castle—mountains of immense magnitude rose in the rear, some naked to the summit, and others exhibiting the most picturesque scenery; in the front, an ancient forest spread its gloomy shades, intermingled with coppices of younger trees; and at the side, in an enchanting valley, between piles of moss-tinted rocks, thrown together in the most romantic manner, with coppices of green oaks filling up their interstices, and wild shrubs hanging waving from their sides—the limpid waters of the Eresma were beheld, in some places running tumultuously over lesser rocks, and in others forming beautiful cascades.

" This was my favourite haunt; the monotonous noise of the waters, the humming of the insect tribes, that danced in the sunbeams which played upon their surface, had something of a lulling nature in it; and still more soothing to my feelings was the profound calm of all around.

" A brilliant assembly was collected one evening in the grand saloon of the castle, but, as usual, I was

unnoticed ; and soon after the arrangement of the different tables, quitted an apartment where I seemed to be considered as nobody, for a walk by the Eresma.

“ A more than usual heaviness hung upon my spirits this evening, and throwing myself at the foot of a rock, ere I proceeded far, I gave way in tears to the feelings that oppressed me ; while thus indulging them a deep sigh, almost breathed in my ear, caused me to raise my head from my hands, on which I rested it, and looking up, with a degree of surprise which made me start from the ground, and crimsoned my cheeks with blushes, I beheld a young cavalier, whom I had noticed that evening among the guests at the castle, leaning against the rock against which I had been reclining, and intently regarding me —Don Rodolph de Bearn.

“ Starting from his motionless attitude, the moment he perceived himself discovered—‘ Pardon, beauteous Dorinda,’ he cried, eagerly approaching me, and in actions the most seductive, ‘ this intrusion on your private moments, but the impulse that led me to follow your steps was not to be resisted. Ah ! had I had the good fortune, in any degree to have attracted your attention as you have done mine, you would not then have been surprised at seeing me here, since you would then in my looks, have read the sentiments you have inspired.’

“ Surprised at this declaration, even more than at his appearance, since though I had often seen him at the castle, I had never, till the present moment, the slightest reason to believe myself an object of attraction to him, I gazed on him in silence, as though I doubted what I heard, and in trying to understand it, lost the use of my faculties.

“ Encouraged by my manner, he ventured to take my hand, and proceeded to declare, that from the

first minute he had seen me I had made an impression on his heart never to be erased, but which particular circumstances prevented his disclosing till he had a private opportunity : this, he added, he had vainly sought till the present evening, when, keeping his eye continually upon me, he had observed me quitting the saloon, and instantly following, pursued my steps, and with feelings to which he could not do justice, beheld my tears—tears which, throwing himself at my feet, he conjured me to explain the cause of, that if he could not have the happiness of removing it, he might at least have the melancholy pleasure of sympathizing with me.

“ This was the first time a declaration of love had ever met my ear, and it came from an object too attractive not to render it pleasing. The fine figure, beautiful features of Don Rodolph had before struck me with admiration ; but never had they appeared so lovely as now, when beaming with a tenderness it was flattering to my vanity to think I had inspired.

“ As my eyes involuntarily rested on him, he appeared more than mortal ; a smile of seductive sweetness hovered on his lips ; and the ardor of his feelings, united to the sultry heat of the hour, gave a glow to his complexion, that rendered almost too dazzling the refulgence of his eyes.

“ I strove to conceal the emotions he excited ; but he was too penetrating for me to succeed in my efforts to do so. My palpitation, my confusion, the blushes that suffused my countenance, all betrayed them. In short, he perceived the advantage he had gained, nor ceased pursuing it, till he had obtained an acknowledgment from me, that his passion was not unpleasing.

“ But this was not all—he now proceeded to inform me, that his dependence on a haughty and avaricious relative, who would never forgive his marry-

ing without fortune, not only prevented the immediate avowal of his attachment, but rendered it absolutely expedient that it should be concealed, till his own master, a circumstance that could not be very far distant, from the advanced age of his kinsman; nor rested till he had drawn from me a promise of that silence respecting it which he desired.

"In the mean time, it was settled we should enjoy the society of one another as often as possible; the spot where my delighted ear had first hearkened to his insidious vows, was the one appointed for our future meetings.

"To paint the change that now took place in my feelings, would be impossible: to think, at the very moment I imagined myself an object of indifference to all, I was an object of love and admiration to such a being—to find a heart at least interested about me—a heart the possession of which the vainest, the most exalted of my sex might envy me, was a source of unutterable rapture. With my feelings the aspect of every thing about me changed; I seemed born as it were to a new existence, born, at length, to feel myself of some value in the creation.

"Alas! transient was the reign of joy; the heavy anxieties that had so long weighed upon me, like wintry clouds suddenly blown back by a driving wind, were only dissipated to return with still greater gloom.

"Nor during its shortlived interval, was it altogether unalloyed: I could not help sometimes accusing myself of imprudence, in so readily admitting the addresses of Don Rodolph, and entering into a clandestine correspondence with him; but, whatever was my uneasiness on the subject, it ceased to be experienced the moment I beheld him; and still, still I persevered in meeting him.

"Our intercourse had continued some weeks, an

intercourse rendered still more delightful by the enchantments of the scenes that witnessed it, when my generous patron, the marquis of Almeria, arrived unexpectedly at the castle ; he soon took an opportunity of having a private conversation with me, in which he acquainted me, that keeping me ever in view, he had lately formed the design of uniting me to a young kinsman of his, who, prepossessed in my favour, by the representation he had given him of me, longed for nothing more than such an event.

“ Confounded by this declaration, from my inability to explain my previous engagement, in consequence of my promise to Don Rodolph, I stood for some minutes silent, and stupidly gazing on him ; then falling at his feet, conjured him to think no more of such a connexion. Alarmed by the vehemence of my manner, the wildness of my looks, he eagerly demanded, as he raised me from the floor, whether I had heard aught to the prejudice of his young kinsman ? I answered in the negative, assuring him as a corroboration of what I said, that till then, I knew not there was such a being in existence.

‘ Then since your averseness to my proposal is owing to no prejudice against him, it must certainly proceed from a previous attachment,’ cried the marquis, fastening his penetrating eyes upon me ; ‘ be candid in your confession ; let the assurance, that the parents for whose sake I first extended my protection towards you, could not have been more interested in your happiness, induce you to repose unlimited confidence in me.’

“ In vain, however, he solicited this, though he set before me in the strongest light, the dangers to which a young female exposed herself, who suffered herself to be drawn into a clandestine correspondence with the other sex. I persevered in denying the justice of his assertions ; and in displeasure at my obstina-

cy, he at length quitted me, to question the dutchess on the subject; she, however, could give him no information on it, but was malicious enough to say, she doubted not my being sufficiently artful to form an attachment without her knowledge.

" Mean while, I had an interview with my lover, and after revealing to him what had just passed, conjured him to release me from the promise of secrecy I had made him, my heart reproaching me incessantly for having any concealment from such a friend as the marquis.

" This, however, he peremptorily refused, alledging, by way of excuse, that a secret enmity existed between his family and the marquis, which he knew would occasion his opposing our union; and that so far from being the disinterested friend I imagined, he was led to propose a marriage between me and his kinsman, in consequence of an assurance from the king, of the forfeited estates of my ancestors being restored to me.

" In a word, he succeeded in confirming me in my promise. Not satisfied, however, with this, he made his apprehensions of losing me, through the over persuasions of the marquis, a pretext for renewing his supplications for a private marriage, supplications which, till then, I would not hearken to for a moment, nor ceased till he had extorted my consent to an immediate union.

" I was sufficiently collected, by the time I re-entered the presence of the marquis, to remove all his doubts of my veracity, and persuade him that my objection to the proposed alliance originated not from any secret attachment, but solely from my present disinclination to change my state.

" His visit to the castle was a short one; the hour in which he left it sealed my fate, being the one in which I gave my hand to Don Rodolph. A ruined

chapel, amid the rocks of Eresma, was the place appointed by him to meet me, with a priest, to receive my vows.

" But not with my usual alacrity did I now hasten to meet him. I felt I was doing wrong, a presageful gloom hung upon my spirits, and more than once tempted me to turn back; but still I went on, contrary to my feelings, contrary to my sense of what was right; and the sufferings entailed upon wilful imprudence soon befel me.

" The sombre hue of every object rendered still more oppressive my feelings; the sun had set amid heavy clouds, which soon began to fall in drizzling showers; the trees shook in a howling blast from the mountains; the waters of the Eresma lost their limpid clearness in the storm, and all wore the aspect of melancholy.

" With difficulty I reached the chapel; my lover met me some paces from it, and eagerly hurried me within its ruined walls. My heart became still more chilled as I surveyed them; every where the ravages of time were discernible. But not to dwell upon my feelings, a priest stood waiting to receive us at a broken altar, and a few minutes made me the bride of Don Rodolph. I shall pass over the arguments he made use of to reconcile me to the step I had taken, arguments which the involuntary transport I derived from the idea of our fates being, as I imagined, irrevocably blended, soon rendered successful. Suffice it to say, two weeks were passed in a state of happiness, which rendered me almost forgetful of the past and unmindful of the future. I was then restored again to the recollection of their being such a thing as sorrow in the world, by Don Rodolph's informing me business of the last importance demanded his immediately leaving the neighbourhood, where he had all this time been but a visiter.

Whither he was going, however, he would not tell me ; the only satisfaction he would give me was, that the moment he could return, he would, and in the mean while would try to contrive some expedient for letting me hear from him ; failing not, as he was departing, to make me renew my promise to him not to disclose our marriage without his permission.

" Day after day I looked forward to hear from him : but day after day passed without the realization of this expectation.

" At length, three weeks after his departure, I was surprised one morning, by the dutchess telling me she was on the eve of a journey to Seville, and desiring me to prepare to accompany her.

" I wished, on many accounts, to be left behind, but dared not to solicit to be so ; and with a heavy heart, set out for that celebrated city. The dutchess had a magnificent palace there, where her arrival was scarcely known, ere she received the compliments of the numerous nobility. Among the entertainments to which we were invited, for I was here lifted to consequence, by the notice with which the marquis of Almeria honoured me, was a tournament.

" The beauty and magnificence of the ladies that filled the richly-ornamented balconies of the court in which it was held, the glittering armour of the knights, their waving plumes, the proud curvettings, and costly trappings of their coursers, the shrill echoes of the war-denouncing trumpet, the exquisite odours that floated through the air, making one almost imagine themselves, at times, seated in the spicy groves of Araby the blest, formed altogether such a scene, as I had scarcely before imagined.

" Two rival troops of knights contended ; at length one of each party alone remained to finish the combat ; some time elapsed ere it was over, so equal

were the combatants in every respect : at last it was decided by one of them being forced from his horse, and unhelmed ; immediately the other jumped from his steed, and raising his visor, approached the spot where he was to receive the prize allotted to the victor.

" Oh, Heavens ! what were my feelings at that moment, when in his features I beheld those of Don Rodolph ! Notwithstanding his cruel silence, I had tried to persuade myself the hours of his absence from me were passed in melancholy retirement ; and the shock which I felt from finding I was mistaken in thinking so, nearly overpowered me ; the most direful suspicions were immediately infused into my heart. Recollecting, however, the multitude which surrounded me, I strove to prevent myself sinking beneath the agony they inflicted.

" I could not, however, refrain from betraying some anxiety : of a lady who sat next me, I inquired concerning Don Rodolph, and from her answers had my worst fears confirmed.

" So far from being a dependant on any relation, she informed me his family were utterly unknown ; and for the distinguished situation he held about the person of the king, his only source of independence, and being ennobled, he was solely indebted to the interest of the duke of Osma, the early patron of his fortunes, but whose friendship he had lately forfeited by his clandestine attempts to gain the affections of his daughter, the beautiful Elvina, of whom, according to public report, he was even madly enamoured.

" Notwithstanding the shame which would have attended the exposure of my feelings, I believe I should not have been able to restrain the transports of indignation and jealousy which this discovery of his baseness and inconstancy excited, but for the hope I entertained of obtaining an opportunity, at the ball

of the approaching evening, of coming to an explanation with him.

" I found means of pencilling a short billet to him without any signature, and in the course of the evening, slipping it into the hand of one of the attendant pages, directed him immediately to convey it to that of Don Rodolph.

" I purposely kept out of his way, and the dutchess of Tarazona, of whose arrival in Seville, owing to his being absent from it for a few days, as I afterwards learned, he had no knowledge, being engaged in another apartment, he had not the slightest suspicion of its coming from me.

" Accordingly he had no hesitation in following the page to an illuminated bower in the garden, into which the ball-room opened, and whither I informed him I should repair, for the purpose of having a private conversation with him.

" The instant the page had retired, he was preparing to throw himself at my feet, with an air of the most impassioned gallantry, under the persuasion of my being some lady, whom the charms of his person and his skill at the tournament, had that day made a conquest of; when suddenly raising my veil, I for a moment rendered him motionless, by the discovery of my features.

" Then recovering himself, he was on the point of rushing from the spot, when seizing his arm with all the vehemence of despair and indignation, protested if he did not stop to let me speak to him, I would follow him to the assembly-room, regardless of the consequences of such a measure.

" This threat had the desired effect, and I proceeded to repeat all I had recently heard, to reproach him for his apparent baseness, and insisted on being immediately introduced to the world as his wife.

" Oh, Heavens ! what was his maddening answer !

he had the hardiness, the unblushing effrontery to say he could not possibly introduce me to it, by a title to which I had no claim. Yes, he now entirely dropt the mask, and without the smallest hesitation, or appearance of compunction for it, acknowledged the cruel deception he had practised on me.

“ Madly enamoured of me, he confessed, at the moment, yet positively determined against a serious overture, in consequence of my want of fortune, he had recourse to a fictitious marriage, to betray me.

“ A domestic personated the priest that united us; and so far from being exasperated at his conduct towards me, he had the insulting insolence to add, he conceived I should be highly indebted to him, since by not shackling me with real fetters, he had left me at liberty to acquire a much more splendid establishment than any he could possibly have offered me.

“ He concluded by advising me, for my own sake, to conceal the transaction, since as I had no proof to adduce of the baseness of which I accused him, I could derive no other satisfaction from its disclosure, than that of perhaps involving him, and the marquis of Almeria, or his son, in some fatal quarrel.

“ What I felt while listening to him, you can easier, I make no doubt, conceive than I describe; astonishment at his, in my eyes, unparalleled villainy, for some minutes chained my utterance; the tempest of my soul then burst forth; I wept, I raved, I threatened, but without avail; and at length bursting from me, with a cool and scornful air, he bid me do as I pleased, as he was perfectly indifferent to the consequences my extravagances might lead to.

“ Vengeance was the immediate impulse of my soul; but when I reflected I could not accomplish it without risking the venerated life of my illustrious benefactor or his son, I relinquished all thoughts

of it. Still more insupportable, however, did my inability to redress them render my wrongs. From this fatal evening, I made illness a pretext for confining myself to my chamber, during the remainder of my stay at Seville, unable, from the distracted state of mind, to make those exertions requisite for entering into society.

“ Nothing could be kinder than the attentions of the marquis to me during this period ; but far from allaying, they rather aggravated my wretchedness, by making me continually reproach myself for the ingratitude and dissimulation with which I had acted towards him. I now clearly perceived, that had I acted with sincerity to him—had I adhered to truth and principle, I should not have been the lost wretch I felt myself.

“ He saw my spirits were dépressed, and he strove to reanimate them, by picturing future scenes of felicity—scenes which, alas ! alas ! I knew but too well were not destined for me to enjoy.

“ He talked to me of conquests he pretended I had made—of the impression my appearance had made on the heart of his young kinsman ; but at length ceased the subject, on finding the agitation into which it threw me.

“ The dutchess at length returned to her castle in Castile ; far, however, from now tranquillizing my mind, the romantic scenes around it, by continually recalling the past to my view, rendered it still more perturbed. At last, unable to endure the wretchedness they excited, by the recollections they revived, and still less the possibility of Don Rodolph's becoming a successful suiter to you, from your ignorance of his baseness, I came to the resolution of abandoning the protection under which the marquis had placed me, and endeavouring to obtain an asy-

lum with you, for the purpose of enlightening you on the subject.

" By means of a domestic, whom I contrived to bribe to my interest, I procured the disguise in which I appeared before you ; and recommending myself to the care of the holy saints, bade an adieu, one morning early, to the scene of my disgrace, taking the precaution of fastening some torn garments to an impending rock of the Eresma, in order, by creating a belief of my having perished there, to prevent a pursuit.

" Sinking with fatigue, and a thousand harassing apprehensions of disappointment, I reached these castle walls : from these apprehensions your compassion soon relieved me—like a pitying angel, you listened to my fabricated tale, and accorded me your protection.

" I soon found that Don Rodolph still continued to prosecute his addresses to you, but whether with any hope of success, I could not discover, unacquainted as all were then with the attachment, pardon my touching on the subject, existing between you and the noble Ferdinand.

" A thousand times, fearful of his succeeding in them, for the charms which have captivated us, we are but too apt to believe equally dangerous to others, I was on the point of throwing myself at your feet, and disclosing the story of my wrongs, but was still withheld by a dread of losing your protection, that kindness, which dropt like honied dew upon my lacerated heart, and the consideration, that if exiled your residence, I should lose all opportunity of knowing the proceedings of Don Rodolph. Anxious, from various motives, to understand the light in which he stood with you, I at length formed the design of introducing myself to his notice, under my assumed character, trusting to the change which art

had made in my complexion to his not discovering me. Accordingly, in pursuance of this determination, I threw myself in his way one day as he was riding in the forest, and after some trifling conversation, in character with my present appearance, gave him to understand I knew of his passion for you, and that if he would reward me for my services, I would do any thing in my power to oblige him respecting you.

“ He eagerly caught at this offer, and I had soon the satisfaction of discovering, that though he had the vanity to hope by perseverance he might in time become one, he as yet was not a favoured lover. What he required of me was to watch your actions closely, in order to ascertain whether he had a rival, and from time to time report them to him. This I faithfully promised, and as faithfully performed, from not perceiving any thing in them which could at all injure you to have disclosed ; not without artfully resolving, I confess, to give him some little room for hope, should I find him inclined, through despair, to transfer his regards where I could not have the power of frustrating his wishes.

“ This, however, in no one instance, was the case ; his vanity not only buoyed him up with hopes of yet succeeding, but the prize in view was too glorious, not to make him think lightly of any difficulty or trouble he had to undergo for its attainment.

“ When again I listened to his mellifluous accents, when again I beheld his insidious smiles, and the seductive sweetness of his looks and manner, I almost doubted the reality of the last scene that had passed between us, thinking it next to impossible that cruelty could lurk beneath such an exterior of tenderness and sensibility.

“ Under this deceitful idea, I began to flatter myself with hopes of yet regaining his affections, and

obtaining reparation for my wrongs ; and, at length, came to the resolution of discovering myself to him.

" Accordingly I informed him, that if he came on such a night to the castle, he should be introduced to one of your favourite women, whom I had interested in his favour ; but though I had changed my dress, my courage failed me on his approach, and in a feigned voice, from the balcony where I watched for him, I told him I could not then have any conversation with him in consequence of being watched.

" I continued still irresolute how to act, whether to come to an immediate explanation with you, or defer the measure till perfectly aware of the nature of your sentiments for him, when the discovery of your attachment to Don Ferdinand decided me on no longer delaying to reveal myself, than till you were sufficiently recovered from the various shocks you had met with, to be able to pay attention to the sorrows of another, not without a faint hope, that if fortunate enough to obtain your interference with the perfidious Rodolph, it might be the means, perhaps, of procuring me the justice he owed me.

" But all my hopes seemed threatened with annihilation, when I found you had entrusted your quarrel to his hand. I shall not, however, dwell on the tortures I alike endured from the thoughts of his death or victory, lost as in either case he appeared equally to me, or the feelings I experienced at the issue, of the combat ; and your passionate declaration of never becoming his, a declaration that, from the effect it produced upon me, had nearly betrayed me into a premature discovery of myself.

" But the knowledge of his safety, without being entitled, from the name of victor, to claim your hand, was not sufficient—I saw, without having recourse to some immediate expedient for doing myself

justice, I should lose the only opportunity I could ever possibly hope to have for that purpose, since I could not doubt the knowledge he had now obtained of your sentiments, banishing him henceforward the castle.

“ This conviction at length suggested to me the idea of endeavouring to betray him into a marriage, by making use of your name.

“ Accordingly I was no sooner out of suspense respecting the issue of the combat, than I lost no time in penning a billet, which I conveyed to him myself, stating—‘ That, penetrated by the long and faithful attachment he had manifested for you, and convinced that it was only by giving your hand to another, you could relieve yourself from the persecutions you underwent on account of his rival, you had come to the resolution of rewarding his passion that night, in the church of St. Ildefonso, by uniting your fate with his, provided he would accept your hand, after the sentiments you had avowed, but involuntarily, and which every moment rendered weaker and weaker for Don Ferdinand, and consented to conceal your marriage till you should think proper to reveal it yourself.’

“ As I imagined, there was no condition to which he would not have subscribed for the sake of calling you his—he returned an answer to your supposed billet, full of the most extravagant professions of love, admiration, gratitude, and devotion, to your every wish ; and all matters being arranged for the ceremony, I returned to prepare for the most agitating hour of my life.

“ I contrived to possess myself of one of your mourning habits, and as soon as attired in it, descended to the church, and prostrating myself before an altar, tried to offer up a supplication to Heaven for support and protection.

" Your step alarmed me—I started up, to experience still greater terror from beholding you : for a moment I knew not how to act ; the opening of a distant door, then announcing the approach of Don Rodolph, impelled me to the frantic expressions which made you fly.

" Don Rodolph, followed by a priest, quickly joined me, and eagerly grasping my trembling hand, without making the slightest effort to draw back the veil which shaded my features from view, called upon the priest to perform his office, as if fearful the delay of a moment might prove fatal to his wishes.

" The ceremony over, the holy father left us to ourselves ; and Don Rodolph then gently folding me in his arms, would have raised the veil, which still invidously intervened between us, when disengaging myself from him, I besought him not to detain me longer, lest I should be traced to the chapel, promising at the midnight hour to admit him through the window to my chamber.

" No sooner had I regained it, than a flood of tears gushed from me ; I wept at once from joy and apprehension—I could not but congratulate myself on the retrieval of my honour, yet trembled to think of the discovery I had to make, a discovery, now so near at hand. I strove, however, to reason myself out of the terror which it excited ; I tried to persuade myself, that the reflection of the engagement into which I had betrayed him being irrevocable, would reconcile Don Rodolph to it. He came, even sooner than I expected. In the morning, he had been informed by me of the exact situation of the apartment, and now, from the lowness of the balcony, readily ascended to it.

" The moment I heard him, I again let fall the veil, which had previously enabled me to deceive him, and shrinking back on his impatiently approach-

ing to clasp me to his bosom, threw myself at his feet, and with a flood of tears, conjured him to listen to me.

“ Surprised, or rather, more properly speaking, alarmed by my attitude, my adjuration, above all, my voice, which agitation no longer enabled me to attempt disguising, as I had done in the church, he hastily tore away my veil without speaking.

“ Oh, Heavens ! never can I forget the dreadful, the soul-appalling expression of his countenance at that moment ? a livid hue instantly overspread it, his eyes gleamed with the fury of fiends, and every feature became convulsed by agitation.

“ After regarding me for a moment in silence, as if doubtful what to decide on, he suddenly twisted one hand in my dishevelled hair, and while a torrent of the most opprobrious epithets, the most direful maledictions, burst from his ashy and quivering lips, with the other drew his sword.

“ I struggled to save myself from his fury, but no doubt he would have succeeded in immolating me to it, had not my shrieks drawn you to my relief.

“ He fled at the first sound of your approach, leaving me in a state, from which perhaps it would have been better I never recovered, for, alas ! to what wretchedness do I revive !—yet perhaps a faint hope still remains, that if the interposition of a generous and exalted friend like you,” turning her now streaming eyes upon the lovely Elvina, “ were obtained with Don Rodolph, he might be prevailed on to acknowledge me to the world.

“ You may, however, perhaps, feel disinclined to any interposition between us—disinclined, from deeming me unworthy, after the confession I have made, of such an exertion in my favour—I shall not murmur, should this prove the case—no, I feel too

sensibly I deserve to suffer, to experience resentment, at the refusal of any act which might relieve me.

" Such is my story—such are the consequences of my suffering myself to be seduced from the plain path of integrity into the winding one of dissimulation. If, notwithstanding what you have heard, you can still deign to notice me, I shall not, as I previously observed, deem myself altogether desolate and forlorn. Should the contrary, however, be the case, should you think any further kindness to me would be misapplied, a convent shall be my immediate refuge ; there, well pleased from the idea of their being considered as some atonement for my errors, religious hardships I will learn to bear, and by prayer and penitence, endeavour to render myself deserving of that happiness in the next world, which, alas ! in this I fear I have forfeited."

CHAP. XII.

Ten thousand fears
Invented wild, ten thousand frantic views
Of horrid rivals, hanging on the charms
For which he melts in fondness, eat him up
With fervent anguish, and consuming rage.
In vain reproaches lend their idle aid,
Deceitful pride, and resolution frail,
Giving false peace a moment; Fancy pours
Afresh her beauties on his busy thought,
Her first endearments twining round the soul,
With all the witchcraft of ensnaring love.

THOMSON.

IN the story of Dorinda, Elvina saw much to condemn; but her condemnation did not exceed her pity; she tried to persuade herself, that differently situated, she never would have known such a lapse from integrity, and under this persuasion, lost not a minute in assuring her that she might rely on her services to their utmost extent, promising to address a letter immediately to Don Rodolph, appointing an interview with him the ensuing evening, when, should her representations of the cruelty of his conduct to her fail of success, she informed her she still should not have to deplore the want of either a peaceful home, or sincere friend, since, while she existed, she might rely on both.

The grateful Dorinda at this assurance would have thrown herself at her feet, but was prevented; and after some further conversation with her, or rather

efforts to try and compose her, the morning being by this time far advanced, she was left to endeavour to take that repose she so much stood in need of.

Faithful to her promise, the moment the sympathizing Elvina had withdrawn from her chamber, she sat down to address Don Rodolph, though almost without a hope of his complying with her request, aware, as she was sensible he must be, of the motive which dictated it. Contrary to her expectations, however, her messenger returned, with a most respectful answer from him, in which he informed her, that at the hour appointed, he should have the honour of waiting on her.

This answer inspired the most sanguine hopes of a happy termination to the affair; since if still resolved on persevering in his cruel conduct, it did not seem at all probable that he would have subjected himself to the remonstrances he might have expected on the occasion: either repentant of this conduct, or fearful, from the discovery that had taken place, of the consequences that might result from adhering to it, it now seemed evident, both to the fair Dorinda herself and her new friends, that it was at length his intention to do her justice; and with the tears which the pleasing idea drew from her, were mingled the congratulations of those friends at it.

In the mean while, Don Ferdinand was in that state of agitating felicity, which the unexpected restoration of happiness inspires: relieved from despair, elevated again to hope, in the enjoyment of his present feelings, he deemed himself amply compensated for his recent sufferings.

But, alas! short was the interval of joy, and light those sufferings, grievous as they had appeared at the moment, when compared with those which almost immediately succeeded them!

In the midst of his exultation, his intoxicating dreams of future bliss, an anonymous letter was put into his hand, brought to the palace by an unknown messenger, who disappeared the instant he had delivered it, and containing the following lines :—

" TO DON FERDINAND DE HARA.

" An enemy to dissimulation, an admirer of the noble character of the gallant Ferdinand, takes this method of opening his eyes to the cruel deception which has been practised on him. Elvina, the long worshipped object of his affections—yes, even she, that mistress for whose sake he has suffered so much, all lovely, all amiable as she appears, is unworthy of the passion she has kindled in his heart.

" Long before she became acquainted with his merits, the accomplishments of Don Rodolph de Bearn had subjugated her affections ; and either to a jealous whim, or a spirit of coquetry, was alone owing the encouragement she gave his addresses, aware that, even in her apparently most secret interviews with him, the watchful, the adoring Rodolph would be at hand to observe her.

" But this was not all—vain, proud, and ambitious, almost beyond belief, of an exalted reputation, she no sooner discovered who he really was, than the fame she saw she might acquire at his expense, by still counterfeiting a passion for him, induced her doing so, for the purpose of creating a belief, that to a sense of filial duty, to considerations which could not but exalt her above the rest of her sex, and obtain her the universal homage of mankind, she sacrificed the tenderest affections of the heart.

" So real seemed her struggles between love and duty, the transports of her pretended grief and distraction, that every heart sympathized in her apparent sufferings, and gave her credit for the virtue she aspired to be thought possessed of.

" But though her vanity was gratified by the attainment of this name, she was sensibly mortified by the failure of her champion, having flattered herself his winning her in the field would have afforded her that pretext for granting him her hand, which pride made her solicitous for, love not having rendered her unmindful of the obscurity of his birth, or the consequent strictures to which an alliance with him would subject her.

" Spite, however, of the thoughts of these strictures, she is resolved on following the impulse of inclination; this night Don Rodolph has a private interview with her, for the purpose of consulting whether some expedient cannot be devised, for preventing the humiliating consequences she apprehends from the measure.

" Should Don Ferdinand therefore entertain any doubts of the correctness of this information, he has nothing more to do to convince himself of the truth of it, than to avail himself of the power he possesses, of admitting himself into the garden of the Castle, the pavillion at the lake being the place appointed for the secret meeting of the two lovers, at the hour of nine.

" If, however, still inclined to dote on, and be deceived, the writer of this has nothing to add further on the subject; in what he has said, he has been actuated neither by malice or private pique, but solely by that wish, which the heart of honour must ever feel, to prevent the triumph of perfidy; and, consequently, can feel no other regret at the result of his communication proving contrary to what he expects,

than what originates in concern at so noble a nature as Don Ferdinand's being imposed on."

So deep rooted was the confidence of the noble youth in the integrity of his mistress, that rage and indignation at the accusation it contained against her, was the impulse of his soul at the first perusal of this letter. A second and more attentive one, however, began to shake his faith, by making him dwell still more particularly on that part which pointed out to him the means of ascertaining whether or no its information was correct.

To paint the agony inflicted by the apprehension of finding her deceitful, would be impossible, an agony rendered still more intolerable by his efforts to conceal it, since, both from the unwillingness which we feel to acknowledge ourselves imposed on, and the adoration in which he held her, he could not bear the idea of ever breathing a hint of the doubts he was now forced to entertain of her.

Never had he so ardently longed for the approach of night, any certainty almost being preferable to the torturing anxiety he endured. Within a short distance of the castle, he alighted, and committing his horse to his attendant, admitted himself, unobserved, into the garden. He had a considerable part of it to traverse, ere he reached the pavilion; at length he came in view of it, and, to his utter consternation, beheld it illuminated.

The presageful fears occasioned by this circumstance, for a moment deprived him of the power of proceeding; then reflecting that a moment's delay might defeat the purpose for which he had come, he eagerly approached it, and darting his eyes through a lattice at the side, beheld Elvina seated on a couch,

nearly opposite him, evidently in an attitude of expectation, her every look and gesture being fully displayed to his view, by the brilliant light which a crystal branch, suspended from the ceiling, diffused through the sumptuous apartment.

At this sight, at the maddening idea, that she was voluntarily, impatiently, in all probability, waiting the approach of his rival, that she had indeed, basely, cruelly, perfidiously, deceived him, he nearly lost all command of himself, and was on the point of rushing into her presence, to upbraid her with his wrongs, and to reproach her for her cruelty, when the reflection, that he could not fully convict her of it, without a still more unquestionable proof of it than he had yet received, withheld him.

This proof was not long wanting—in a few minutes he heard approaching steps at the other side of the pavilion, and immediately after, beheld Don Rodolph entering. As he advanced, a magnificent cloak of purple velvet, which he had gracefully wrapt round him, fell from his shoulders, and displayed a form to view, a statuary might with pleasure have copied.

Elvina, half rising, met his obeisance with a look of pleasure, and motioning him to the vacant seat beside her, then resumed her own.

The agonized Ferdinand could see no more ; in a transport of rage and indignation, he drew his sword, and was on the point of rushing into the building, when again he was prevented by the sudden interposition of reflection. Don Rodolph was not, he considered, the proper object of his fury ; it was not he but Elvina had deceived him ; “to imminolate him to it, therefore,” he cried, “would be an act of injustice : let me see whether he exults in her perfidy—whether he vaunts of the triumph she has afforded him over me, ere I attempt to gratify the resentment of my soul.”

In a state bordering on distraction, he hurried from the garden, fearful if he lingered in it, he should vainly strive to restrain himself, and remounting his horse, sped back to Seville.

The instant he alighted from it, he shut himself up in his chamber, passing the remainder of the night in addressing a letter to Elvina. His heart must have burst, had he not given some utterance to the feelings that pervaded it.

After acquainting her with the scene he had witnessed, but without being able to collect himself sufficiently to inform her of the circumstance to which his being a spectator of it was owing, he proceeded to upbraid her with his wrongs, and reproach her for her perfidy ; concluding by informing her, ere she received this last memorial of his unhappy attachment to her, he should be on his way from Seville, in order to try, by change of scene, to overcome the wretchedness she had made him suffer, and recover the composure she had so long and cruelly interrupted.

This was indeed his intention ; an embassy was on the eve of setting out for Portugal, in consequence of most unpleasant intelligence from that kingdom, and he determined on accompanying it.

Don Fernando, the King, had recently paid the debt of nature ; but, instead of permitting the crown quietly to devolve to Beatrice, his daughter, Queen of Castile, the people declared in favour of Don John, his natural brother, and grand master of Avis, a religious order of chivalry ; an event, however, which, in all probability, would never have taken place, but for the establishment of the illegitimacy of the Queen, a circumstance suspected by many, but never fully ascertained till after his decease.

Solely addicted to his pleasures, the surest way of obtaining an ascendancy over him, was by minister-

ing to his gratification. Amongst those who, from interested motives, acted this unworthy part, was Sir Fernando Audare, a knight of the most artful turn, and who conceived no sacrifice of principle too great for the attainment of the honours he coveted.

He had not long been in the councils of the King, when he was summoned to the death-bed of a brother, resident some distance from Seville.

On entering his chamber, the attendants were ordered to withdraw, and the dying man proceeded to inform him, that though, from motives of affection, anxious once more to behold him, ere he closed his eyes for ever, he was still more so, for the purpose of imparting a secret to him he had long wished to reveal, and recommending to his protection a relation, of whom, as yet, he had no knowledge.

This was, that he had, some years back, formed a union with a person, much his inferior in birth, to which circumstance was owing the concealment of his marriage, a marriage death had, some time before, dissolved, and by which he had one daughter, the object of his greatest solicitude, and to recommend whom to his care, in a still more particular manner than he could by letter, had been the principal reason of his sending for him. "Though I cannot," he added, "imagine you will feel any reluctance to grant her your protection, especially when you behold her, yet, in order to induce you to grant it more readily than might perhaps be otherwise the case, I must now inform you, that it is only for a short period it will be required, she having already secured to herself a legal guardian, by a private union, some months ago, with a young knight, called Sir Lorenzo d'Acunha, whose addresses to her I interdicted, in consequence of forming still higher expectations for her, with regard to fortune, and of which I remained ignorant, till a few weeks back, when, on pressing her to form

another connexion, she confessed it. Business has taken him to a distant part of Spain, but his return is now shortly expected; and, till his arrival, I wish both his bride and her inheritance to be under your care."

Sir Fernando, at all times ready to promise, whatever he might be to perform, and anxious, besides to grasp at any circumstance which could afford him a chance of securing to himself an inheritance he had long coveted, and, till the present moment, looked forward with certainty to possessing, eagerly accepted the trust his unsuspecting brother was so anxious to repose in him. Accordingly the young Leonora was introduced to him, and presented to his view the loveliest object he had ever before seen.

Scarcely had he recovered the astonishment excited by such transcendent charms, ere the liveliest transport pervaded his soul, at the idea of her being committed to his care, since both from his knowledge of the disposition of the King, and the authority which, from this circumstance, he should have the power of exercising over her, he flattered himself with being able to render her charms subservient to his advancement; thus, to the project of robbing her of her inheritance, uniting the still more execrable one of attempting to betray her into vice.

The funeral of his brother over, he lost no time in removing the lovely Leonora to a magnificent villa of his own, on the banks of the Tagus, some miles from the capital, and where all around an air of voluptuousness breathed, well calculated to soften the youthful mind, and render it easily susceptible of the most dangerous impressions.

The building, adorned with all that the luxury of the times could invent to render it delightful, glittering with costly marbles, ornamented with sumptuous tapestry, and exhibiting in every chamber the finest

specimens of the kindred arts of painting and sculpture, commanded on one side the moving scenery of the Tagus, the stately castles that adorned its banks, the tremendous attitude of Cape Rogue, the ocean, and a distant view of the opposite shore, fading, at the close of day, into the impurpling tints then thrown across the landscape; while to the other extended those groves of orange and lemon, which, with their potent fragrance, loaded the balmy air for miles around, and, like the golden gleams of autumn, gave a rich colouring to the scenery, by the intermixture of their burnished fruit with the deep dark green of other trees.

Having settled her in this terrestrial paradise, he again repaired to court, where, after accounting for his absence, he introduced her name with such encomiums, as inflamed the curiosity of the King to behold her, and induced him to command she might be brought to court. This command Don Fernando excused himself from obeying, on account of her birth, the illegitimacy of which, in consequence of finding there was no proof of the marriage of her parents, he was determined to maintain, in order that he might be the better enabled to possess himself of her heritage, which, at all events, he determined to seize.

The King admitted his excuse, but could perceive no obstacle to his seeing her at his villa. Again, however, the artful Fernando hesitated, till he had received a full and explicit assurance from the already half-enamoured monarch, that whatever complaisance he showed on this occasion, should not go unrewarded.

Accordingly, an introduction took place to the beauteous Leonora, but without his having the slightest intimation of her previous engagement, Don Fernando not only choosing to remain silent on it now, *but to appear utterly ignorant hereafter, should any*

discovery of it take place, not, however, from any apprehension that the knowledge of it would be the means of preventing the sentiments with which he wished the king inspired for her, but solely that his own character might not seem as black as otherwise might be the case.

The consequences of this introduction were such as he hoped for; the king became madly enamoured of her; and Leonora, continually exposed to attentions which his exalted rank and personal accomplishments rendered but too pleasing, gradually began to conceive something of a reciprocal passion for him.

But she had been brought up in the school of virtue; and alarmed at her first consciousness of this passion, immediately decided, as the surest means, in her opinion, of preventing a continuance of that intercourse which was but too likely to confirm it, to acquaint her royal lover with her engagement to another.

The King delayed not acquainting Sir Fernando with her communication, and received from him a promise, as soon as he had recovered from the surprise he pretended to feel on the occasion, of inquiring into the affair. The result of this pretended inquiry was, his informing his royal master, a little while after, that he had indeed ascertained her having formed such a connexion as she had mentioned to him, but that the omission of certain ceremonies, by not rendering it legal, had left her still at full liberty to form another whenever she pleased.

This assurance was no otherwise interesting to the king, than as it gave him hopes of being sooner able to overcome her scruples; his own, relative to such affairs, if indeed he had ever experienced any, being long before completely subdued.

Assailed on all sides, but more especially by him whose duty it was to have upheld her tottering vir-

tue, and guarded her from the approach of vice, the unfortunate Leonora at length fell into the snare spread for her. But the delirium which occasioned her fall was of short continuance; she awoke from it to all the horrors with which conscious guilt impresses the feeling mind.

The king essayed his utmost art to sooth her agonies; and, at length, his passion for her, every day, or rather hour, becoming, if possible, more violent, as the most efficacious method he could adopt for the purpose, avowed a determination of making her his wife.

In a transport of mingled gratitude and regret, the weeping beauty fell at his feet at this declaration, saying, that was an honour she could never attain, since her huckless stars had already bound her to another.

Snatching her from the ground, the king replied to this assertion, by passionately declaring, that though chains of adamant bound her to another, he would find means of bursting them, to make her his.

Overcome by his persuasions, the equally insidious pleadings of her own heart, the artful representations of her uncle, and the suggestions of pride and ambition, she, at length, suffered herself to be still prevailed on to falsify still further her wedding vows to Sir Lorenzo, by accepting those of her royal seducer; in order to render her reluctance still less, Sir Fernando assuring her he would find means of reconciling him to her conduct.

In short, not to dwell unnecessarily on particulars, the king's determination to make her his wife was speedily followed by a summons to the Bishop of Coimbra to perform the ceremony.

But, notwithstanding the pains taken by Sir Fernando to conceal her previous marriage, though infinitely *more out of regard to his own than her reputation,* the secret of it had transpired, through means of some

of her late father's domestics ; and, in consequence, the good man stood lost in astonishment, at being called upon to unite her to another.

His hesitation, however, was quickly at an end, Sir Fernando, aware of what it was owing to, and fearful of the least delay, lest it should occasion a change in the sentiments of the king, commanded him to perform the ceremony, in a voice and with a look, which gave him clearly to understand what he might expect, should he disregard the mandate ; and which accordingly produced the desired effect.

The coronation of the royal bride shortly followed her nuptials, and was solemnized with a pomp and magnificence equalling, if not exceeding, that of any of her predecessors.

In due course of time, she gave birth to a daughter, named Beatrice, and who, at an early age, became consort to John, king of Castile, son of Henry count de Trastamere, and natural brother and deposer of Pedro, justly surnamed the Cruel.

The fate of Sir Lorenzo, the real husband of the queen, remained involved in mystery : that he was not dead at the time of her second nuptials, as sir Fernando had artfully reported, was confidently believed by many, though that he had not been long allowed to survive them, was a pretty general idea, in consequence of his being no more heard of, an idea which heightened the detestation with which the arrogance and profligacy of his manners, and the undue ascendancy he had, through his artifices, obtained over the king, caused sir Fernando to be regarded. In the attainment, however, of the wealth and honours he coveted, and which his alliance to the crown enabled him readily to obtain, he strove to console himself for his want of popularity.

The king, after the lapse of years, beholding no prospect of an increase of family, and aware of the

doubts entertained of the legitimacy of his daughter, and which might, he reflected, endanger her succession to the throne, summoned the nobles, prelates, and principal citizens of the kingdom, to Lisbon, and there compelled them to swear obedience to her, and pledge themselves to secure her succession.

This oath, however, was considered by many of too compulsory a nature to be binding: it is probable, however, had the issue of this unlawful marriage been a boy, they would have been more inclined towards him, as they would not then have beheld the same prospect of being under the dominion of Castile, and which, rather than submit to, they almost preferred death; the natives of the respective countries hating each other at that time with the utmost inveteracy, and carrying on their wars against each other with the greatest bitterness and rancour.

Besides, their aversion to the yoke was still further increased, by the impolitic conduct of the Castilians at this period, who, yielding to their natural haughtiness and dislike to them, a haughtiness, augmented by the readiness with which the king of Portugal had given his daughter to their sovereign, though but a short while before he had declared himself his foe, scrupled not, whenever they now met, to already begin to domineer over them, and remind them that the period was approaching, in which, from the union of the two kingdoms, they should have still greater opportunities of treating them as they pleased.

From these and a variety of other causes, they conceived the design, even previous to the death of the king, of resisting his daughter's succession to the crown.

Their eyes were turned upon Don John, his natural brother, and, as has already been mentioned, grand master of the religious order of Avis, still in the very flower of his days, and possessed of all those accom-

plishments calculated to obtain esteem and admiration.

Still, however, their impulse in his favour was checked by the certainty of his illegitimacy, and their only a suspicion of that of the lady Beatrice. This only obstacle however, to his investment with the regal dignity, was removed a few days after the decease of the king, by the unexpected appearance of Sir Lorenzo, from a mysterious confinement in Spain, and which confirming the illegitimacy of the lady Beatrice, the majority of the people no longer hesitated how to act, declaring, since the crown had fallen between two natural children, they would choose the one from whose rule they beheld the greatest prospect of reaping advantage; and, accordingly, proceeding in a body to Don John, made him a tender of it.

Such a gift, few, perhaps, at least of his time of life, would have had the resolution to refuse; he joyfully accepted it on the solemn conditions to which it was offered to him, namely, that he should be good and merciful, maintain strict justice, without flattering the strong more than the weak; forever keep in mind its being the gift of the people; and unite hand and heart, with them, in defence of the rights and privileges of Portugal.

In the mean time, preparations were making for the obsequies of the late king; he was interred in the church of the Franciscans, at Lisbon; and at the ceremony, most of the nobility of the kingdom attended, in pursuance of the invitation of the Queen, and her kinsman, Sir Fernando Audare; but which was given more for the purpose of affording him an opportunity of addressing them, relative to the recent proceedings, of which he was well informed, and calling upon them to unite in supporting the claims of the lady Beatrice, than out of any respect to the deceased.

"The grand master of Avis was likewise present, as also many from Coimbra, Oporto, and Ourique, the towns which had principally declared in his favour.

Notwithstanding their presence, however, Don Fernando persevered in his intention of haranguing the nobility in behalf of the young Queen, as soon as the funeral was over.

Little attention, however, was paid to what he said, his haughtiness and tyranny preventing his having many partizans : besides, the horrors of a civil war, in which they clearly perceived they should involve the country, by interfering in the business, were too dreadful to the imagination of the few inclined to hearken to him, not to determine them to do no more than remain neuter.

With a heart full of gloomy presages, in consequence of the indifference with which his harangue had been received, he returned with the queen to her residence.

In the mean time, exasperated at his conduct, the friends of Don John repaired from the church of the Franciscans to the cathedral of St. Dominick, to deliberate on the subject.

From the measures he was pursuing, they were unanimous in thinking that if they did not immediately take the field against him, they might be disappointed of seeing the crown upon the head of him they had chosen to reign over them ; and accordingly resolved on his immediate death, as a traitor to his country ; one who had, both in the present and many other instances, evinced himself an enemy to its interests and honour, but especially in the shameful peace which he had prevailed on the late king to consent to with the king of Castile ; to whom, after sending his challenge, on account, as he averred, of his two cousins, the daughters of Pedro, and married the

eldest, Constance, to the duke of Lancaster, and the other, Isabella, to his royal brother, the earl of Cambridge, and whose heritage he pretended he unlawfully kept from them, he suddenly evinced a disinclination to meet, notwithstanding his having received a large re-enforcement of men at arms from England ; and which disgraceful conduct was entirely imputed to the councils of Don Fernando, whose predilection to Spain, in consequence, it was supposed, of being secretly in her pay, was notorious.

They accordingly proceeded in a body with Don John at their head, whose ambition was by this time too much inflamed to allow of his hesitating at any step likely to secure him in the sovereignty, to the mint, where the widowed queen, with her unprincipled kinsman then resided.

The efforts made to oppose their entrance were soon defeated ; and, in a tumultuous body, they entered the apartment of the lady, who terrified at their appearance, cast herself at the feet of their leader, and with uplifted hands, conjured him to have mercy on her.

Her supplications were attended to : Don John lost no time in assuring her, on her own account she had nothing to dread, the sole object of their coming thither being to inflict that summary punishment on the traitor, Don Fernando, which he had merited, and deprive the king of Castile of that dangerous advocate which he had too long had in that country.

In vain she attempted to plead for him : the long suspended sword of justice was at length unsheathed — spite of her tears and entreaties, he was dragged from the hiding-place to which his fears had hurried him, and sacrificed to that vengeance his crimes had provoked.

Terrified at his fate, she entreated permission, and readily obtained it, to retire to Seville ; and confirm-

ed, on her arrival there, the reports that had preceded her of the revolt of the Portuguese.

The rage and surprise of the king were unutterable, having, from the moment of his marriage with Beatrice, made himself as sure of the kingdom, as if from that period it had actually been in his possession. He immediately deputed two noblemen of distinguished abilities, to proceed thither, for the purpose of endeavouring to bring them back to their allegiance, and levying on the inhabitants of Lisbon, as the first indication of his resentment, the sum which had been promised him with the princess, but which, as yet, he had not received ; and with these it was whom the unhappy Ferdinand resolved to leave Seville, in order to give Elvina a proof of his being no longer the dupe of her supposed artifices—a resolution which he found no difficulty in accomplishing, but which seemed so strange, so singular to the marquis, at such a juncture, that he could not forbear pressing to know the real cause of it, almost persuaded he had not assigned it, when he mentioned a wish to revisit Portugal as the motive of it.

In vain, however, he urged its disclosure ; pride, generosity, and lingering tenderness, alike guarded the secret. Don Ferdinand could neither bear to acknowledge that he had been deceived, nor yet that Elvina had been the deceiver ; and leaving it to time to explain what his father was so desirous of learning, but which, besides, to acknowledge to him now, he reflected, could answer no other end than to unnecessarily agitate and alarm him, departed for Lisbon.

CHAP. XIII.

Turn not to thought my brain, but let me find
Some unfrequented shade, there lay me down,
And let forgetful dulness steal upon me,
To soften and assuage this pain of thinking.

Rowe.

In the mean while, unconscious of what had happened, Elvina listened with astonishment to Don Randolph, who instead of pleading guilty to the charges advanced against him, and declaring his readiness to acknowledge Dorinda, solemnly asserted his innocence, and denied her having any legal claim whatever upon him.

"At the dutchess of Tarazona's, as she herself had mentioned, their acquaintance," he said, "had first commenced; but transcendent as her beauty was, a previous attachment to another object," and at these words he raised his eyes to the countenance of the lovely Elvina, with an expression that excited a blush of mingled confusion and anger, "had prevented his experiencing any great emotion at the sight of it: but though it had failed, from the above cause, of inspiring him with a warmer feeling than admiration, he was led, from the way in which she evidently courted them, and the interesting softness of her manners, to pay her the most particular attentions, attentions which he confessed his persevering in, till awoken to a sense of their impropriety, as he meant

nothing serious by them, in consequence of some expressions which dropt from her, indicative of a belief to the contrary.

"To his infinite surprise and regret," he continued, "the alteration in his conduct was followed by a torrent of reproaches, in which she at once accused him of having trifled with her affections, and betrayed the interested motives to which her wish for his alliance was owing.

"In order to rid himself of these reproaches, he had shortened his visit to his friend, and returning to Seville, shortly lost sight of her, in the variety of pursuits and avocations in which he was there engaged, till her idea was unexpectedly revived in his mind the preceding day, by a letter from her, conjuring him to meet her at night in the church of St. Ildefonso, in order to afford her his assistance, in extricating her from a situation of the greatest embarrassment and peril, in which an elopement from the protection of the dutchess of Tarazona, owing to the tyranny of that lady, had involved her.

"Not doubting the truth of this statement, from not suspecting her possessed of the consummate art," he continued, "which I have now ascertained her being, I suffered myself to be prevailed on to do as she requested; but had scarcely met her, ere, in an affected fright, artfully intended, as you'll perceive by what followed, for the purpose of drawing me still further on, she stopt short in the particulars she appeared on the point of communicating, and telling me she heard some one approaching, and must therefore instantly leave me, desired me, in the course of a little time, to come to the window of her apartment, which she particularly described to me, and she would admit me through it.

"I obeyed, anxious to know what service I could render her, and curious, besides, I confess, to learn

by what means she obtained an asylum in your palace ; but had scarcely entered the chamber, when, dropping the mask entirely, she unequivocally informed me that her object in alluring me to it was, to place me in a situation that would give colour to the allegations she designed to make against me, should I still persist in refusing to realize the expectations which she insisted I had raised in her mind by my attentions to her.

" As soon as I had recovered from the astonishment into which the hardness of her conduct threw me, I entreated her to recollect herself ; and with an admonition to her, not, in trying to injure me, to ruin herself irretrievably, was on the point of retiring, when, seizing my arm, she uttered these piercing cries, which, as she intended, drew you and your companion to the chamber. Just as you entered it, I succeeded in effecting my escape ; but had hardly done so, ere I regretted not having remained, convinced of the advantage she would take of my precipitate retreat.

" Anxious to exculpate myself in your eyes, I was revolving the mode I should adopt for that purpose, when I had the honour of receiving your letter, desiring to see me here this evening, and which left me no longer at a loss how to act.

" Should I have failed of proving my innocence, of acquitting myself of the charges brought against me, let me be confronted with my fair accuser ; and should she then persist in her statement, or be able to produce the priest who performed the ceremony she asserts to have taken place, I shall no longer attempt to disprove it."

This was too reasonable a request not immediately to be attended to, by the wondering Elvina, who, lost in a maze of perplexity, knew not what to think or what to doubt. She accordingly led the way to the

chamber of Dorinda ; but, instead of finding her there, as she had expected, anxiously waiting her approach, to learn the result of her conference with Don Rodolph, or see him prostrate himself at her feet, the apartment was empty, and she was on the point of quitting it, to seek her elsewhere, when a folded billet, on a table, catching her eye, she glanced at it, and perceiving it superscribed to herself, hastily caught it up, and breaking the seal, read, with a degree of surprise that for a few minutes robbed her of the use of her faculties, the following lines :—

TO THE LADY ELVINA.

“ I find I arrogated too much to myself, when I imagined I should have courage to persist in the plan I laid down for myself to pursue : at the thoughts of meeting the angry glances of Don Rodolph’s speaking eye, of encountering his just resentment, of repeating to his face my cruel assertions against him, my resolution falters ; and, at length, induces me to fly, as the only way of extricating myself from the embarrassments in which premeditated falsehood has involved me.

“ Yes, lovely Elvina, with mingled shame and remorse, I now confess the tale I addressed to your pitying ear was nothing but a tissue of falsehoods ; to the hand of Don Rodolph I had never any claim, though from the first moment I beheld him, it was the most ardent wish of my heart to obtain it ; and through his means be released from the painful fetters of dependance.

“ Rendered desperate by the disappointment of this wish—a wish which various circumstances unhappily led me to cherish, as one likely to be accom-

plished, I determined to hesitate at nothing likely to effect it ; and, in consequence, had recourse to the falsehoods with which I abused your ear—falsehoods in which there certainly was as much of folly as of temerity, since I can now perceive how very improbable it was, that what Don Rodolph could not be tempted to by love, he would have been awed into by threats.

“ Should I have occasioned the suspension of your favourable opinion of him, an opinion of which he is eminently deserving, this, I trust, will be the means of restoring him to it : to think my confession will undo the mischief I may have done, is the only consolation I can look to.

“ With ten thousand thanks, ten thousand blessings, for the goodness experienced in it, I fly this castle, to bury, in a very different asylum, my sorrows and my shame.—Yes, though I abused your generosity, my heart was deeply sensible of it ; and the least of my afflictions is not that of no more beholding that angelic countenance, still beaming with mildness and compassion—no more hearing those soft accents, so indicative of sensibility. But time presses—another minute, and I may not be able to escape from the terrors I dread—Farewell, therefore, lovely and amiable Elvina, farewell for ever !

DORINDA.”

Nothing short perhaps of this self-acknowledgment of it, from the appearance of ingenuousness with which she had related her story, could ultimately have succeeded in persuading Elvina of the falsehood of the fair Dorinda. Now, however, to harbour a doubt of it, was impossible ; and, with min-

gled astonishment and regret, she reviewed her conduct—astonishment that one so young should have been capable of such duplicity, and regret, that a being, so eminently endowed by nature, should have so misapplied the gifts bestowed on her.

But from the reflections it occasioned, she was quickly roused by Don Rodolph, who, having availed himself of the letter dropping from her trembling hand, to take it up, and read it, now threw himself at her feet, and, in an impassioned voice, called upon her to complete the happiness his acquittal gave him, by an assurance that it had fully succeeded in re-establishing him in her good opinion.

Shrinking back, Elvina coldly replied, the remembrance of the past being awakened in her mind by his present air and manner—"That as far as he had been injured in it, by the assertions of the unhappy Dorinda, he was now restored to it;" then insisting on his letting her pass, and indicating a wish for his immediate departure from the castle, she quitted the apartment, impatient at once to relieve herself from his presence, and relate to Olivia what had happened.

She met her coming from a remote part of the castle, where, during this time, she had been engaged in a private conference with the father Abbot.

Her surprise at the communication of Elvina equalled that which Elvina herself felt on the subject; the fair Dorinda, from her appearance and manner, being one of the last beings on earth whose truth and sincerity she could have doubted.

With the astonishment she experienced at her conduct, was mingled a deep regret at not knowing the place to which she had flown, "that by our kindness," she said, "we might have mitigated her anguish—by our councils strengthened her returning

virtue, and assisted her to regain the path from which she so unhappily suffered herself to deviate."

In this regret, the tender, the feeling Elvina too sincerely participated, not to determine on doing every thing in her power to discover her. The sorrows of a contrite heart were to her inexpressibly interesting ; and the difficulties, besides, to which her apparently unprotected state might expose her, too obvious not to render her anxious in the extreme to trace her—that worldly want, at least, might not embitter, or endanger her penitence.

But from dwelling on what her present sufferings might possibly be, she was quickly diverted by the letter of Don Ferdinand—a letter which, from its cruel contents, so overwhelmed her with anguish, as to render her nearly incapable, for a time, of any exertion.

Great as had been her previous sufferings, yet, till now, from the feelings it excited, she conceived she had never fully tasted of sorrow : excruciating as were the pangs inflicted by the thoughts of being torn from him by the hand of fate, yet still, at times, they were mitigated, by the idea of retaining his esteem and admiration—of her memory being forever cherished in his heart, with love and reverence.

But now no such soothing idea—no such consoling hope remained—and, in her anguish at being deprived of it, she abandoned herself to all the horrors of despair.

Her first impulse, after the perusal of his cruel letter, was to attempt her own justification ; but she abandoned the intention, on reflecting that it was one in which she could not persevere, without running the risk of endangering his life—that life so precious to her ; since in the explanation that must take place to accomplish it, all that had passed between Don Ro-

dolph and Dorinda must be disclosed ; and from her knowledge of his disposition, she was convinced even a hint on the subject would be sufficient to provoke inquiries from him, which probably irritated, as the haughty and vindictive Rodolph was already against him, in consequence of knowing him to be a favoured rival, might lead to the renewal of hostilities between them.

In vain the sympathizing Olivia endeavoured to support her under this new affliction ; her heart was incapable of admitting consolation for it—no argument—no attention, could mitigate the anguish imparted by the idea of being lost to the esteem—to the regard of him, whose esteem, whose regards, were so invaluable to her, whom, till life's last throb, she felt she should adore.

As soon as she was sufficiently recovered from the rude shock his cruel and unexpected accusation had given her, to be able to collect her thoughts again, she would immediately have carried her previous resolution of retiring to a convent into effect, but that, ere renunciation of the world, it was requisite some certain arrangements should be made.

Previous to her entering a convent, she had determined on the resignation of her estates to the next heir, and to his uninterrupted enjoyment of which, it was necessary that she herself should put him in formal possession.

She was therefore, on this account, as his residence was at a considerable distance from the castle, compelled to linger yet a little longer, in a world of which the destruction of every fond and flattering hope—every hope, on the realization of which her heart reposed for happiness and tranquillity, had already, young as she was, rendered her completely tired—a world which she appeared to have entered but to experience sorrow, or check the inordinate wishes of

covetousness and ambition, by proving that happiness is not always to be found in the society of birth and riches, as some falsely imagine, or the condition of mankind so unequal, as, in the repining spirit of discontent, is asserted by many, a thousand accidents continually crossing the path of the affluent as well as humble, to chequer their days, and embitter the enjoyments afforded by fortune.

Three weeks had now passed away, since the receipt of Don Ferdinand's cruel letter, but without any diminution of the pangs it had occasioned his lovely mistress : her languid eye—her fading cheek—the tears with which, in spite of her efforts to restrain them, it was incessantly bedewed, all tended to evince them as keen as ever ; when, one evening, as lost in agonizing thought, she was slowly pacing, by herself, the distant hall, in which she had once been so terrified, and through the pointed casement of which, the moon, already rising, poured her silver light, while the folding doors at its extremity, thrown open, admitted a partial view of the embowering shades of the garden, well calculated, from their deepening gloom, to heighten the pensive influence of the hour, she was suddenly startled by something flitting past it, and hastening to the door, beheld the mysterious being to whom was owing her having been so, retreating from it amidst the trees.

Impelled by curiosity—by the recollection of the emotion betrayed by the deceased duke, while listening to her account of the affair, an emotion, which, both then and since, whenever thought of, excited a suspicion, that in ascribing it entirely to the contrivance of Don Rodolph, he was not sincere ; perhaps by a feeling also, that rendered, at the moment, the idea of the terrific not unpleasing to her, she immediately pursued him ; but, after keeping him in view through a considerable part of the garden, suddenly

lost sight of him, amidst the ruins of a triumphal arch, a venerable monument of Roman grandeur and antiquity, enclosed between rude rocks, overrun with wild plants and thickets, and which, from its picturesque effect, amidst the surrounding scenery, had been allowed to remain : a wilderness spread beyond, clustering towards its extremity, into deep masses of long-protracted shade, impervious to the noon tide ray, and, from their solemn, their unbroken gloom, breathing a brown horror over the whole.

The here thinly scattered trees permitted her to see to some distance, and having glanced through them, without being able to catch a glimpse of him, she retreated within the arch, from which she had advanced a little way in quest of him, and accidentally looking into a kind of recess, into which it was hollowed at one side, perceived a door, of which, till then, she had no knowledge, lying open. Somewhat impatiently advancing to it, she beheld a narrow descent of broken stone steps beyond, covered in many places with grass and weeds. For a moment she stood hesitating ; then, almost persuaded it was by this way the mysterious stranger had vanished from her view, and urged on by a resistless impulse to pursue the adventure, she ventured to descend, and at the bottom, found herself before the entrance of a cave, with the existence of which, like that of the door above, she, till then, was unacquainted.

Impelled onward by the feeling which had led her so far, she advanced into it, and nearly opposite beheld a kind of low arch, through which a languid sunbeam played on the rugged ground, and to which hastily approaching, as if fearful, if she paused a moment, her courage might forsake her, a circumstance she felt convinced she should afterwards regret, she discovered a small chapel beyond, evidently cut in the solid rock, the giving way, in many

places, of the black marble, with which it was lined, discovering its natural incrustation, and containing an altar and tomb, both also of the same coloured marble ; a window of stained glass rose immediately above the former, and at the latter, with her back to the entrance, knelt a female figure, covered with a long mourning.

With a degree of surprise, or rather astonishment, at what she saw, which rooted her to the spot, Elvina cast her eyes round her ; but chiefly was her attention attracted by the kneeling lady, from whose fixed attitude, but for the deep sighs she every now and then gave utterance to, she probably would have been led to believe her a figure belonging to the tomb.

But if her astonishment was great before she saw her face, how was it increased, when, on her slowly rising from the ground, and half turning, she revealed to her the features of Olivia.

With a shriek, which echoed through the place, she pronounced her name, and tottering forward, fell, nearly overpowered by the feelings this strange discovery excited, against the tomb.

Olivia hastened to her support, but with the utmost wildness of look and gesture ; and raising her by the arm—" Oh, Heavens !" she exclaimed, " is it possible ?—do I indeed behold you here ?—How discovered you this place ?—or by what means were you led hither ?"

" By most mysterious ones indeed," replied Elvina, a little recovering herself, but still retaining all the paleness, the wildness of amazement.

" Mysterious ones !" repeated Olivia, emphatically, and regarding her still more earnestly ; " explain yourself !"

" Say first," rejoined Elvina, " why I find you here—or rather, why the secrecy observed respecting

your coming hither?—whose the tomb over which you have been mourning?—who the being for whom, but in secret, you allow yourself to breathe the sigh of sorrow?"

" You shall hear all," returned Olivia, in a solemn tone, and recovering, in a degree, her wonted air of dignified composure: " After what you have discovered, it would be folly to attempt refusing to you the explanation you require—an explanation which, believe me, you cannot be more anxious to receive than I to give; so grievous, so oppressive to my feelings, has been the secrecy to which I have been compelled for years; but, ere I can attempt entering upon it, I must again inquire, by what means you were led to trace me here?"

Elvina, as succinctly as emotion would permit, informed her.

For a minute after, evidently wrapt in amazement, Olivia remained without speaking: then, with uplifted hands and eyes—" Oh God!" she said, " how wonderful are thy ways! for, whether by supernatural or human means led hither, still, by what has happened, I can perceive it is thy divine will, that my long tortured heart should be unfolded to her view, and, thinking so, can have no hesitation on the subject: but," again addressing herself to the wondering Elvina, and with something of returning wildness, " let us leave this cell of death, ere I proceed to gratify your curiosity; for shapes of terror present themselves to my fancy in its murky gloom, and sounds of horror seem to strike upon my fearful ear!"

Alarmed by her looks, still more by her expressions, Elvina hastily led the way from it, but with feelings so subdued, by the wild conjectures they gave rise to, that, on regaining the arch, she had scarcely courage to cast a glance through the twilight gloom, which, by this time, enveloped it.

With her agitated and trembling companion, she hastened forward, and, now that the ardour of romantic impulse had subsided, beheld, with wonder, and a kind of shuddering sensation, the distance she had come in pursuit of the mysterious stranger.

Almost fearful she should discover him gliding through the gloom, or stealing forward from some one of the lonely buildings scattered through the garden, she scarcely ventured to look on either side.

The melancholy rustling of the boughs in the freshened air, the low murmurs of the breeze itself, the sudden flitting of the bat across the path, and the hoarse screams of the howlet, from its ivy-mantled haunt, did not tend to lessen this superstitious dread—a dread more painful, from being almost new to her, till the present moment.

But the instant she regained the castle, it was lost in the anxiety she felt for the promised relation of Olivia: seating herself beside her, with inward agitation, she prepared to listen to particulars, in which, from the expression that prefaced them, she had reason to believe herself deeply interested.

CHAP. XIV.

Our youth is like the dream of the hunter on the hill of heath; he sleeps in the mild beams of the sun; but he awakes amidst a storm; the red lightning flies around; and the trees shake their heads to the wind. He looks back with joy on the day of the sun, and the pleasant dreams of his rest.

OSSIAN.

"I CAN perceive by your manner," said Olivia, "that in the communication I am about making, you feel a persuasion of being more than slightly concerned; nor will you find yourself mistaken; but ere I enter upon those particulars which immediately concern you to know, 'tis necessary to touch upon others not so directly interesting." Then, after a transient pause, evidently occasioned by that emotion which the retrospect of sorrow awakens, she thus proceeded:

"The gloomy shades of night were descending fast, when in journeying across the Pyrenees, a young knight and his squire found themselves bewildered in the difficult and dangerous passes of these mountains; deep woods rendered impenetrable to the eye by the darkness of the hour, spread around them; and their awful shudderings, as the breezes swept through them, mingled with the howlings of distant wolves, and the angry noise of dashing torrents, rendered still more unpleasant the sensation produced by the circumstance.

"Irresolute how to act, whether to remain station-

ary till morning, or by advancing run the risk of encountering perhaps more certain danger, they had nearly checked their horses, when suddenly a long streaming beam of light came trembling through the gloom ; hailing it as their polar star, they directly advanced in the direction in which it came ; and after penetrating a little way through the trees, found themselves before the gates of an ancient edifice, rising high above them—gates which were instantly thrown open, on their request for admission ; and while the attendant was committed to the care of the domestics, the knight was conducted to the hall, where the noble owners of the castle, together with their son, a youth nearly the age of the knight himself, were seated at supper.

“ Their reception of him was at once polite and hospitable, such as in a few minutes to make him feel himself perfectly at home ; and the gratitude it inspired was still further increased, by a pressing invitation to remain where he was, till entirely recovered from the fatigue he gave them to understand he had lately gone through, an invitation which his immediate prepossession in their favour, or rather the wish it excited for an opportunity of cultivating their friendship, induced him to accept.

All around him wore an appearance of magnificence, but a magnificence too evidently on the decline, not rather to chill than exalt the feelings. The rich tapestry with which the walls were hung, wore the faded hue of neglect and time ; the portraits of the ancient chieftains of the family seemed ready to fall from their once burnished frames ; the velvet coverings of the couches were moth-eaten ; the ornaments of the fretted roof decayed ; the attendants, though numerous, were indifferently clad ; and all, in short, appeared indicative of one of these mourn-

ful revolutions in the fortunes of the house, from which none are exempt.

" Led, by the sympathetic feeling the persuasion of this excited, to observe still more attentively his entertainers, Sir Lorenzo, so this young knight was named, soon fancied he perceived strong indications of unhappiness in their looks and manner, evident proofs of their not being in possession of that felicity, which, as far as he could judge, they appeared eminently deserving of.

" At length the hour for retiring arrived, and with a mind oppressed with melancholy sensations, he was conducted to the chamber prepared for him, and there left to his repose ; but this was by no means as perfect as from his fatigue might have been expected ; the impression made on his mind, by the events of the day, affected him while sleeping ; and, at an early hour, he gladly abandoned his restless couch, for the enjoyment of the morning air, the contemplation of the various beauties that attend the opening dawn.

" The clouds breaking from the mountains, drawing their misty veil from the face of nature, and revealing her in blushes, presented a sight to his enchanted eye, which, accompanied as it was by the warblings of early birds, the faint and nearly indistinct tinklings of distant sheep-bells, and the responsive lowings of cattle from the deep vallies scattered among these mountains, elevated him to rapture.

" Impatient to enjoy at large the charms of the hour, he descended to the court of the castle, whence he had a perfect view of the building, which the hour at which he had gained admission to it prevented his then having ; and by the morning beam that played upon its rude old battlements, and with transitory splendour lighted up its antique windows, perceived that it was only at a distance it could appear formi-

table, the dilapidations of time being every where preceptible.

" But from the contemplation of its mouldering grandeur he was quickly called by the surrounding scenery, which, as the sun ascended, displayed every moment new beauties. Here his beams streaming through the divisions in the mountains, showed their due perspective, and chequered the intervals between them with gold ;—there the light falling strong behind the castle, brought distant objects to view, through the ~~alter~~ walls of its remote towers.

" Wrapt in the feelings it inspired—feelings he involuntarily contrasted with the languid ones produced by the dull and unvarying pleasures of magnificence, Sir Lorenzo wandered onward, almost unconsciously, till he came to a green platform, midway a steep and hollow path, winding to the bottom of the acclivity on which the castle stood, and immediately before the mouth of a cave, overgrown with ivy and fern, intermingled with myrtles, jessamine, and other luxuriant and odoriferous shrubs, and where the humming of the mountain bee met his delighted ear, luxuriating in the wild sweets that overspread the cliffs, and which here shooting to an immense height, were rendered still more picturesque by the goats that browsed upon them, and here and there, leaning down the steep abyss, seemed to hang in air.

" Here spread on either side the dusky forests of intermingled beech, pine, and chesnut, whose savage wildness, and fearful gloom, had appeared so terrific to his imagination the preceding night ; nor could he wonder at the effect their brown horrors had then had upon it, since even now they were appalling.

" He was about examining the cave, when the sight of a lady, in an attitude of devotion, at a rude altar nearly opposite the entrance, checked him from

advancing into it; but as he was drawing back
was recalled by the voice of his interesting ho-
Donna Clara.

'Let me not prevent your inspection of this ro-
tic spot, chevalier,' she said, hastening towards
and inviting him by her gestures to enter; 'Tis
vourite haunt of mine, yet not so much on accou-
the magnificence of its prospects, or the delig-
refuge it affords in the warm seasons from the
pressive heats, as from its having been the favo-
retreat of my lost daughter; all that ~~else~~ it th-
of a hermitage was of her designing; here she
ed to inhale the sweets of early day, amid s-
which could not fail of elevating the ~~feeling~~ hear-
the Creator, here to offer up her orisons, and inc-
those calm sensations, those soothing reflections,
kened in the mind by contemplating his benefic.
Here, too, she equally loved to linger, when
moonbeams looked in at the cave, and all ar-
seemed to harmonize with her feelings: but I fo-
chevalier, that these are particulars, which, as a si-
ger, could not be at all interesting to you.'

"Sir Lorenzo politely requested to assure h-
the contrary—'Whatever could recall the memor-
departed worth or genius, must ever,' he said, 'be
teresting to the heart of sensibility.'

"After an examination of this favourite spot
returned with her to the castle, involuntarily mu-
as he proceeded, on the innumerable affliction
this life; for to that indelible grief which he was
suaded a heart like hers must feel at the loss of
dear connexion, was united, he felt almost pain-
convinced, from the observations he had made, t-
anxieties inseparable from an embarrassed situati-

'But thus,' pursuing the melancholy reflectio-
sighed to himself, 'do misfortunes, like waves ro-
after waves, often rapidly succeed each other, d-
lating the human heart, and wrecking every hope'

"In their way to the breakfast-room, they passed through a hall hung with family portraits; the picture of a young female, in the garb of a novice, suddenly caught his attention; there was something in the expression of the countenance which interested his feelings, and his looks, ever true to these feelings, now eloquently expressed them.

"You seem pleased, sir knight, with that portrait," said Donna Clara, also pausing, and with a melancholy smile.

'Say rather, charmed,' returned he, in an impassioned tone, 'the meekness, the sweetness of that countenance, are to me far beyond either brilliancy of colouring, or regularity of features.'

'It is to me indeed attractive,' said Donna Clara, 'but you will not wonder at that when I inform you, that'—her voice faltering as she spoke—"that is the portrait of the daughter I lament.'

"At these words, Sir Lorenzo drew back, with something of sacred reverence in his look, in order to have a still better view of it; then turning to the sorrowing mother—"Had I been capable before," he cried, 'of wondering at your regrets, that wonder would now have ceased.'

"But not to exhaust your patience," continued Olivia "by too minute a detail, suffice it to say, that a kind of tender reverence, for the memory of her lost daughter, was excited in the romantic mind of the young knight, by the particulars which Donna Clara gave him of her; and with sensations such as the pensive pilgrim approaches the shrine of a worshipped saint, he more than once again sought opportunities of viewing her resemblance.

"At length he bade adieu to his kind entertainers, impressed with the liveliest sentiments of esteem and gratitude for them, and not without an assurance of regard on their side... At the moment of parting, he

took from his bosom a miniature of himself, which had belonged to a sister just deceased, and to receive whose last sigh had been the occasion of the journey to France, from which he was now returning, and presenting it to Donna Clara, entreated her acceptance of it, as a memento of his esteem, and a proof of the sincerity of his wish to retain a place in her remembrance.

" He departed, rich in hope, sanguine in expectation ; but he was fated to disappointment. In little more than a year after his introduction to the castle, he again found himself in its vicinity, lost to all, but a proud consciousness of not meriting the injuries he had met with.

" Brooding o'er these injuries, meditating revenge, he could not think of approaching its kind inmates ; but though withheld by the agitation and distraction of his mind from appearing before them, he was induced, by the grateful feelings of his heart, to be minute in his inquiries concerning them ; and to his utter grief and dismay, learned, from the master of the little post-house in their neighbourhood, where about sunset he had been compelled to stop for the night, on account of his exhausted steed, that soon after his being at the castle, its youthful heir was carried off by a contagious disorder ; and ere his grave was well closed over him, his unhappy mother had fallen a victim to the sorrow occasioned by his death ; ' leaving the poor old count,' added the host—but Sir Lorenzo heard no more ; he could easily picture to himself what his desolation must be at this double loss, and rushed from the house, in order to conceal the feelings excited by the afflicting information.

" Tears, which burning indignation had long suspended, now gushed in torrents from him, at the sorrows of the count ; but though even to agony he mourned them, his inability to administer consolation,

as well as the unsettled state of his mind unfitting him for social conversation, still opposed his repairing to the castle.

" Unconsciously, however, the impetuosity of his feelings had hurried him towards it; ere he was aware, he found himself before its shaded walls; the gates were open, and dark; no directive ray now came streaming from its antique towers; the gloom of night, heightened by that of seeming desolation, already enveloped them; no murmur but that of the wind was abroad, rustling through the trees; all was dreary and silent; all indicative of its being the house of mourning, the abode of sorrow.

" Lost in painful regrets, in melancholy reflections on the evanescent nature of earthly happiness, Sir Lorenzo remained leaning some minutes against the gate, when just as he was turning away, a light from a distant range of windows induced him to enter, and crossing to it, he beheld, as he had hoped, the count in the apartment from whence it came. The lights were so disposed as to afford him a perfect view of his countenance, and he saw from its expression his imagination had not magnified his sufferings; but his attention was quickly drawn from him, by a female in another part of the room, whose countenance, the moment he cast his eyes on it, recalled to his recollection the picture which had so interested him; the likeness was not confined to the features, it extended to the air, the very dress; and in astonishment at so strong a one, he could not help feeling a wish to learn who she was—a wish which, after a little hesitation, yielding to, he entered the castle, contrary to his first resolve; and his name being announced, was quickly admitted to the presence of the count. He was received with joy, but a joy evidently chastened by grief. The recollections his presence revived, for a few minutes subdued the count; when a little reco-

vered from his emotion, ‘The scene, Sir Lorenzo,’ he cried, after welcoming him again to the castle, ‘has been changed since you were first here; but thus vanish human joys; my heart, however, though chilled, is still capable of receiving pleasure from the converse of a friend; nor, though severe the inflictions of Heaven, am I utterly forlorn; one treasure still remains,’ glancing as he spoke at his companion, who had continued in the room, and who Sir Lorenzo now beheld pale, trembling, and her eyes rolling in tears,—‘my daughter.’

“Sir Lorenzo started, and with a degree of wildness repeated the expression.—‘Your daughter?’ he exclaimed, regarding him as though he thought his senses wandered—‘Good Heavens!’

‘I guess the cause of your emotion,’ returned the count; ‘you were led to believe her no longer an inhabitant of this world; and indeed, at the period you were here, I considered her as dead to us, since the tomb could not have more effectually separated her from her connexions, than the cloistered walls in which she was then inclosed, as we conceived, for life; but the irrevocable vows which would have interdicted her return to me, were not yet taken, when Heaven thought proper to try me, by depriving me of her beloved mother and brother, and from performing their obsequies, I hastened to snatch her to my heart, never, never to part again, while life remains.’

“Sir Lorenzo listened with surprise, with something too of regret; former impressions began to be revived, and involuntarily he wished he had sooner known of the existence of the count’s daughter; for something whispered to his heart, that her parents would not have discouraged his addresses to her; and misery of the most acute nature would have been spared him by a union with her.

“The count strenuously opposed his return to the

inn ; and at length, Sir Lorenzo, soothed by his kind attentions, soothed by the idea of being in the society of beings who by their looks and manner, though unacquainted with the anguish that preyed upon his heart, appeared to sympathize in it, consented to remain where he was for the night. The next day, however, he resolved on departing ; the next day, however, the renewal of the arguments and entreaties which had then subdued his resolution, again conquered it ; and another, another, and another passed away, yet still found him in the castle.

" Pleasure he was not capable of tasting any where ; but he there experienced what his long harassed feelings made him long for, tranquillity ; and like a mariner, who, after a tempestuous voyage, finds himself on a sudden in a peaceful haven, he almost shrunk from the thoughts of again entering into scenes of tumult and warfare. Bitterly, however, he reproached himself for deferring his departure, for yielding to the feelings that induced his doing so ; he had an imperious duty to fulfil ; he had wrongs, which it behoved his honour to revenge ; yet still, still he suffered himself to be prevailed on to delay it, by a kind entreaty from the count, or a persuasive look, or gentle request from the daughter to accompany her to some wild spot, some romantic solitude in the vicinity of the castle.

" The count's prepossession in his favour, heightened by a previous knowledge of his connexions, was of a nature to make him treat him more as a beloved relative, or the son of a dear friend, than as a stranger ; he opened his heart to him respecting his daughter ; amidst the eulogiums which his partial fondness led him to lavish on her, he disclosed the anxiety he felt to see her secure of protection ere his death.

' In losing me,' he said, resuming the subject one

HOUSES OF OSMA AND ALMERIA.

evening, as with his youthful friend he slowly paced the ramparts, ‘she loses her only natural protector ; my wishing, therefore, to see her happily disposed of ere my death, cannot be wondered at, and not only happily, but soon, convinced as I am that I shall not be much longer spared to her ; no, though her filial attentions softened the poignancy of my anguish, they have not been able to prevent its becoming fatal. - I feel that the steps of my departure are near ; that soon the airy halls of my fathers shall be opened to receive me ; the gates of the clouds unfolded ; that for me no spring will return with its showers, no summer with its fruits, no autumn with its golden foliage, or winter with its social comforts ; and under this conviction, am determined, from my increasing anxiety to have her secured from the dangers that await on unprotected youth and inexperience to urge more strongly than ever her acceptance of an overture that has recently been made, or rather repeated, for her hand, for hitherto she has turned a repulsive ear to every thing of the kind.’

“Sir Lorenzo listened to him in silence, but a silence not free from emotion. Their walk was pursued till they came to a lonely chamber, opening to the ramparts. As they turned into it, the Count beheld his daughter retreating from it, as if she hoped she had not been seen.

“In advancing to the door by which she had escaped, something glittering on the ground caught the attention of Sir Lorenzo ; he stooped for it, and, to his unutterable surprise, beheld his own miniature, which he had entreated her mother’s acceptance of ; the crystal was wet, and this circumstance, united to the precipitate manner, the air of confusion with which she had darted from the room, led to a vague suspicion, that, but for certain recollections at the moment, would have thrilled him with rapture.

"The count, glancing at it as he took it up, immediately recollected it, and by his looks evinced his not being without a similar suspicion. Embarrassed at the idea of this being the case, Sir Lorenzo scarcely knew how to look or speak. From the awkward situation in which he felt himself, he was soon, however, relieved by the count; gently laying his hand upon his arm, as he was moving towards the door, 'Sir Lorenzo,' he said, 'I see by your looks you are aware of the idea excited in my mind, by what has just occurred; it induces me to declare, that if your heart acknowledges a mutual prepossession, your wishes shall not meet with any opposition from me; if your unsettled fortune, which you have more than once touched upon to me, is the only cause to which your silence hitherto, relative to my daughter, has been owing, that shall be no obstacle to your happiness; she is not entitled by her own to form lofty expectations, yet it is not so humble as to render it imprudent for her to obey the dictates of a disinterested passion; if, therefore, a union with her can constitute your happiness, she shall be yours; if, however, the contrary is the case, I have nothing further to add, than that my faith in your honour and generosity is too great, to permit me to fear any thing transpiring to her prejudice from you.'

"Sir Lorenzo paused, hesitated, faltered; at length, in sudden transport, he threw himself at the feet of the count, declaring the warmest wishes of his heart were realized, in being permitted to lift his eyes to his daughter.

"That evening these wishes were revealed to her by her father, but without aught escaping him that could wound her delicacy, by letting her suspect that it was owing to the discovery of her secret attachment Sir Lorenzo was encouraged to declare them. On her feelings on the occasion, it is not necessary to

expatriate—her feelings at finding that not only her passion was returned, but sanctioned by her father.

“ Short, however, was her enjoyment of happiness ; ere she had well time to congratulate herself on the apparent accomplishment of her wishes, she was doomed to mourn their eternal disappointment.

“ The evening after Sir Lorenzo’s avowal, as from the castle walls she was admiring with him the magnificent prospects that spread beyond, rendered still more sublime by the refulgence of the setting sun, she suddenly observed his countenance to alter, his brows to contract, and his eyes to roll wildly ; alarmed at this sudden alteration in his looks, looks which but the moment before had been beaming with all the tenderness of love and sensibility, she for a few minutes regarded him in silence ; then fearful of the motive to which her inquiring into the cause of it might be imputed, yet anxious, whatever it might be, to recall him to himself, she made an effort for the purpose, by again pointing out to him the mingled beauty and sublimity of the scenery. For some time he appeared not to notice her remarks, then suddenly grasping her trembling hand—

‘ Yes, yes,’ he cried, ‘ I perceive it ; the awful grandeur of the woods, the still more sublime magnificence of the mountains, the gorgeous clouds of evening ; and there was a time when such prospects, when such a scene, would have elevated me to rapture ; but that time is past ; the charms of nature cannot delight the distracted mind, they cannot fix the attention, they cannot be enjoyed by him who is at variance with himself, who meditates revenge, who is brooding over wrongs, above all, who is conscious of having deviated into the winding path of dissimulation, of having suffered a lapse of honour ; nor is it fit they should ; wonder not, therefore, at my being *unaffected* by them, for I am that being I have just

described : tempted for a moment beyond my strength, by an offer of happiness exceeding my hope, I suffered myself to forget I had no right to the enjoyment of it ; but the delirium which occasioned me to do so is over ; I recover from it ere too late, to save myself from the excruciating, the eternal remorse I should feel, at the idea of having deceived unsuspecting innocence and confiding worth :—but this is no place for explanation,’ he added, with still greater wildness, descending from the ramparts as he spoke, and drawing her towards the apartment where her father sat, lost in the delightful contemplation of her imagined happiness.

“ He started at the disordered looks of Sir Lorenzo, who leading his daughter to him, as if fearful, if he faltered a moment in the explanation he intended, he should not have courage to proceed in it—‘ I am come,’ he cried, ‘ to render back to you, pure and lovely as I received it from you, the treasure you bestowed on me ; to render it back to you, not because I would not sacrifice my life to obtain it, but because honour forbids my retaining it. I will not, count, deprecate your resentment ; I will not attempt to extenuate my conduct ; I will merely unfold my heart to your view, and with an assurance, that should your injured feelings urge you afterwards to sheath your sword in it, it shall not be defended by me.

“ He then proceeded to say, that shortly after his return to Lisbon, which, had he not been so completely deceived by the countess with regard to the death of her daughter, would not have been so immediate as it was, he became acquainted with a young lady, of beauty so exquisite, and accomplishments so rare, as soon to subjugate his heart, and who favouring his passion, a clandestine union took place between them, her father entertaining much higher expectations for her than he had the power of realizing.

While waiting for a favourable opportunity of disclosing it, he found himself under the necessity of taking another journey to France, in consequence of his claim to the estate his lately deceased sister, the widow of a nobleman of that kingdom, who left the whole of his property to her, had bequeathed him, being disputed.

‘ Soon after my departure,’ he continued, ‘ the father of my wife dying, she was removed to Lisbon by her uncle, Sir Fernando Audere, the bosom friend and insidious counsellor of the king, for the express purpose of being thrown in his way. Every thing succeeded according to his wishes ; the voluptuous monarch no sooner beheld her, than he became even madly enamoured of her ; nor rested till he had subverted her principles, and elevated her to the rank of queen, notwithstanding her well known engagement to me ; thus alike crowning the ambitious wishes of her unprincipled kinsman, and proving himself an utter contemner of all sacred and moral obligations.

The intelligence no sooner reached me, through the medium of a friend, than burning for revenge, I quitted France, nor paused for even necessary rest, till at last compelled to do so here. Fatal circumstance ! it occasioned my introduction to a being, of whom, improbable as it may seem, I was enamoured ere I saw her, from description, and who, from consequently considering her something in the light of a first love, I was led to observe with a degree of attention, that permitting none of her perfections to escape me, soon convinced me she was entitled to the esteem and admiration of every heart.

“ The respite I experienced from tormenting thoughts, when conversing with her ; the soothing influence her gentle accents had upon my irritated, my anguished feelings, rendered her still more interesting, still more enchanting to me ; and all traces of

that passion which I had felt for Leonora, but which her perfidy had by this time nearly converted into hatred, were gradually lost in the one she inspired.

" Daily strengthening, I felt I was wrong in lingering here ; not, however, from doubting my own honour, but merely from the misery I was conscious I was incurring, by feeding a hopeless attachment ; still, however, I could not tear myself away, but I soon found I had relied too much on my own strength —as long as temptation remained at a distance, I believed I could resist it, but the moment it approached, I fell ; honour, however, regained its ascendancy over me, ere my lapse had occasioned any irretrievable consequences ; and with mingled horror and indignation, I thought of having for a moment been tempted to believe that Leonora's violation of the vows that bound us, also justified mine, of having for a moment suffered myself to decide on remaining passive under my wrongs, and thus furnishing the world with reason to believe I was accessory to my own disgrace.'

" What further passed on this occasion, it is not necessary to relate ; suffice it, he received the pardon of the count ; the effort he had made to regain the proud elevation of virtue, entitled him, he conceived, to his forgiveness ; but from that moment he gave him to understand all intercourse must cease between them.

" Of the propriety of this determination, his own feelings rendered him too sensible, to permit his offering the slightest opposition to it. After what had passed, the thought of remaining another moment in the castle, was not endurable ; he departed that very night, not without the most passionate entreaties for forgiveness, and ardent vows for the happiness of her whose tranquillity he had but too much cause to fear he had fatally interrupted.

"Alas! unavailing were these vows; the renovating sun of happiness never again beamed around me."

"You!" exclaimed Elvina, in accents of surprise, interrupting her at these words.

Olivia faintly inclined her head—"Yes," she replied, "in me you behold the loved, the perhaps too valued daughter of Donna Clara; that daughter, whom, from the manner in which she mentioned her to him, Sir Lorenzo was led to believe no longer an inhabitant of this world; that daughter, who, but in the early morning of life, had any experience of real felicity; to that period I look back with fond and agonizing regret; I cannot think of the connexions I have lost, the sorrows that weighed them to the grave, my family extirpated and gone, without sighs of anguish and tears of bitterness; for alas! desolate is now the dwelling of Olivia; silence is in the house of her fathers; the thistle shakes there its lonely head; the moss whistles to the wind; the blast of the desert comes, it howls in the empty court, and whistles round the half-worn shield; no more the pilgrim approaches it, to receive the meed of benevolence; no more the stranger to seek a shelter; dark is the dwelling of those who once rendered it the seat of hospitality; low their pillow of dust: but I reproach myself for weakness in yielding to these regrets, more especially when I reflect on the shortness of life, and that consequently ere long, the mourner, like the mourned, will be at peace."

Then after another transient pause—a pause occasioned by her fast flowing tears—tears with which those of the tender, the sympathising, the exquisitely feeling Elvina were mingled, she thus continued:—

"Families, like states, are subject to decay. The *once princely* fortune of my ancestors by degrees

dwindled away, till little more at length remained for their descendants, than a slender inheritance ; but the pride of the family did not fall with its fortune ; and my father, the Count de Miranda, perceiving it utterly impossible to give to both his children the advantages he wished, determined on devoting one to retirement, rather than dooming both to obscurity ; and accordingly it was decided, from a very early period, that I should take the veil ; my mother, though the most affectionate of parents, being at length induced by his arguments to acquiesce in the painful necessity there appeared for the measure.

" I shall pass over the regrets an ardent attachment to my connexions, and a lively imagination, made me suffer, at the idea of being secluded for life ; persuaded, however, to believe, like my mother, that circumstances rendered it unavoidable, I endeavoured to reconcile myself to the idea; chiefly, however, from consideration for the feelings of my mother ; and so well succeeded in my efforts for the purpose, as to confirm my brother in the belief he was led to entertain, in order to prevent that interposition in my behalf which his generous nature would have occasioned, that to real inclination was owing my intended assumption of the veil.

" But much as I regretted entering a convent, the events to which my recall from it was owing, prevented the circumstance from imparting any happiness. Gladly would I have continued its inmate, to have known I still possessed the tenderest of mothers, the most beloved of brothers. But not needlessly to exhaust your patience—

" As soon as the first transports of my father's grief were sufficiently subsided, to permit him to speak or think of aught but those he had lost, Sir Lorenzo became the frequent subject of discourse, and gradually, almost imperceptibly I may say, I imbibed,

from the glowing colours in which he described him, above all, the emotion with which he informed me, as mentioned to him by my departed mother, he had viewed my picture—a passion of the most romantic nature for him.

“ On the idea of being an object of tenderness, of admiration, to a heart such as I was led to imagine his, I began by degrees to dwell with extacy. His picture, of which I soon contrived to possess myself, became the dear companion of my lonely hours. In the beaming eye, in the hovering smile, I saw all that elevation of soul, that sweetness of disposition ascribed to him ; and yielding to my passion for him—a passion fed by a hope of our yet meeting, turned a repulsive car to every overture that was made for my hand.

“ This hope was at length gratified ; what followed I have already related. For some time, notwithstanding the tenderness of his attentions, I remained in suspense relative to his sentiments, owing to his obstinate silence respecting them ; but this was at last terminated, only, however, to ultimately plunge me into greater unhappiness.

“ My anguish at finding him not only lost to me, but lost to happiness—the affections of that generous, that tender heart completely thrown away, was unspeakable—an anguish heightened by the fearful consequences I anticipated from the revenge he meditated. In the agony imparted by my apprehension of them, I strove to prevail on my father to dissuade him from persevering in his intention of seeking it ; but against his own sense of honour nothing could induce him to act ; with all the pride of the ancient Castilian swelling in his soul, he deemed his meditated revenge as justifiable. But to be as brief as possible—

“ *My father's presages relative to himself were*

soon verified ; he died shortly after the departure of Sir Lorenzo, and with his last breath enjoined me to repair to the palace of Osma, the protection of whose illustrious owner, his distant relative, and most particular friend, he had secured me, and where, he trusted, from the scenes I must necessarily mix in, I should recover my happiness and tranquillity.

" In obedience to his commands, I accordingly quitted my native residence, as soon as I had paid the last honours to his remains ; but alas ! the scenes that awaited me here were but ill calculated to produce the effect he wished. The dutchess, high spirited and impatient of control, could ill brook the restraints imposed upon her by the duke respecting her connexions. The irritation occasioned by opposition and resentment gradually weakened love, till at length indifference succeeding passion, continual animosities ensued.

" Those domestic feuds, so contrary to what I had ever been accustomed to, rendered my residence at the castle so unpleasant, from the harassing effect they had upon my previously agitated spirits, that I at length decided on returning to my native woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom besides infinitely better suited the pensive habit of my soul, than the magnificent entertainments and occasional gayety I here witnessed.

" A few days previous to my forming this determination, the dutchess made an attempt to quit the castle clandestinely with her child, for the purpose of taking refuge with her relations, from the alledged tyranny of the duke ; in consequence of which he resolved on separating the child from her ; and accordingly, in pursuance of this resolution, proposed, on learning my intention of returning to the Pyrenees, that I should take it with me—a proposition which, on consulting the dutchess, and finding it met her approbation. I acceded to.

"The companion of my young charge, the infant daughter of the marquis and marchioness of Lerida, distant relatives of the dutchess, and who, on going to England, where the marquis was appointed ambassador, had left her with her, lest the voyage, from her tender years should be injurious to her, was also committed to my care. But scarcely had I returned to the Pyrenees, ere I was shocked by an account of the death of the dutchess, and ere I had in any degree recovered from it, that of her child followed."

CHAP. XV.

Could there be hewn a monstrous gap in nature,
A flaw made through the centre by some god,
Through which the groans of ghosts might strike thy ear,
They would not wound thee as this story will.

Lxx.

"**H**er child!" repeated Elvina, with the wildest emotion; "her child, say you?" involuntarily grasping her arm.

"Anticipated you not a discovery of an agitating nature from my preface to this narrative?" returned Olivia.

"Oh! not of this nature," replied the agitated Elvina; "but relieve my incertitude—say at once, have I no claim to the title I have so long possessed?"

"None," returned Olivia, solemnly: to terminate your suspense, know at once, that you are the daughter of the marquis of Lerida, the daughter I have just spoken of." She paused for a few minutes. Elvina sunk beneath the feelings excited by this discovery; then coming a little to herself, she motioned her to proceed; anxious, impatient, from various motives, to know to what cause was owing her having been passed to the world as the daughter of the duke.

"Hardly had I despatched a courier to the duke with the melancholy tidings," resumed Olivia, "ere a letter arrived, which harrowed up my soul. It came

from Sir Lorenzo ; not, he assured me, for the purpose of endeavouring to revive those sentiments which, spite of himself, it was his happiness to think I had once entertained for him, but merely to prevent my holding his memory in detestation, by explaining the circumstances to which the obloquy he anticipated falling on it was owing.

" He then informed me, after being detained some weeks in a cottage of the Pyrenees, by an illness that threatened his life, he renewed his journey ; but had not travelled far, when, to his surprise, he was met by a young Andalusian knight, who had been to Lisbon, where he became acquainted with him, to seek his fortune ; and who, after their mutual salutations were over, explicitly told him he was perfectly acquainted with the nature of the wrongs he had sustained from Sir Fernando ; and that, if anxious for revenge on him, he could furnish him with an opportunity of obtaining it, Sir Fernando being at that very time an inmate of his uncle's castle near Seville.

" This intelligence was not more unexpected than welcome, Sir Lorenzo continued ; he immediately shaped his course towards the habitation, where he was led to believe he should find the base contriver of his dishonour : but on reaching it, was assured by his companion, that to hope openly to obtain the satisfaction he required, was next to impossible ; Sir Fernando, to his knowledge, being determined on not meeting him in single combat ; and likewise too well defended not to be able to repel every public attack he might make on him : he therefore advised his retiring till midnight to an inn in the neighbourhood, at which hour he promised to admit him to his chamber, where, without danger of disappointment, he might accomplish his revenge, and which he averred he was justifiable in seeking in this manner ; as after the injuries he had sustained from him, the

laws of honour did not require that he should give him a chance of defending himself.

'Villain as he was,' said Sir Lorenzo, 'still I shrank with horror from the thought of acting the part of an assassin towards him; but a perseverance in insidious reasoning at length overruled my scruples, and at the hour appointed I repaired to the castle, and was admitted, as I imagined to his chamber; but in the very act of stooping within the curtains to strike him with my dagger, my arm was seized—a loud exclamation was uttered—several persons rushed into the room, and seizing me, I was bound and sent off to Seville, on a charge of having attempted murder, in order to conceal the depredations I intended.'

'Unsupported as I was in my defence, by any testimony in my favour, I in vain pleaded my innocence of it; my false friend persisted in it; and as a means of putting my guilt beyond doubt, suborned witnesses to prove that my paternal inheritance being dissipated, I had long associated with characters of a most desperate description for the purpose of retrieving my fortune.'

'His motive for this conduct did not long remain inexplicable; I soon surmised that it was owing to his wish to advance his interest with Sir Fernando, the patron of his fortunes, that he had, either of himself, or in conjunction with him, contrived this stratagem for my destruction, my removal being absolutely essential to the preservation of his reputation.'

"He concluded by saying, he was then loaded with chains, the inmate of a dreary dungeon, which he no more expected to leave, till the moment arrived for his expiating his imputed guilt on the scaffold.

"The sufferings of innocence, and triumph of guilt, at all times afflicting, were in this instance insupportable. As soon as the distraction of my soul would permit me to think, I resolved on an effort to

interest the duke for him ; and, in consequence, despatched another messenger to him.

“ What I endured, while awaiting his answer, is not to be described ; neither my surprise at seeing him enter the castle, about the time I expected it.—He did not permit me to remain long in ignorance of the motive of his journey : scarcely noticing the inquiries I tremblingly addressed to him—

‘ Your looks,’ said he, first satisfying himself we were alone, ‘ are too indicative of anxiety, not to induce me to be prompt in relieving you from it. I have hastened hither, for the express purpose of assuring you, every exertion in my power to save your friend from the fate impending over him, shall be made, on one condition.’ He paused at these words, and looked earnestly at me.

‘ Oh ! name it,’ I cried, involuntarily throwing myself at his feet, and with uplifted hands, and all the wildness of emotion, ‘ relieve me from suspense ; the duke of Osma surely cannot propose a condition to which I could object.’

‘ Of that,’ resumed he, raising me forcibly, ‘ you shall soon be satisfied.

‘ You are not now, I presume,’ he continued, ‘ to learn that the estate of the late dutchess, in consequence of the death of her daughter, belongs of right to the Almeria family, such being the disposition her father made respecting it ; but so painful, so irritating to my feelings is the idea of my hereditary enemies obtaining such an accession of interest, as they would derive from its possession, that rather than permit it to revert to them, I have conceived the design of concealing the death of my daughter, and substituting in her place, from being about her age, as well as the promise she already gives of being all the heart could desire, the daughter of the marquis of Lerida—a design easy of accomplishment, provi-

ded I have your assistance in it, none but your people knowing of her death, in consequence of the precautions I had recourse to, to prevent its disclosure by your messenger, whom I fortunately met ere he reached the castle ; and it is on condition of you consenting to afford it me, that I promise to undertake the deliverance of Sir Lorenzo.'

"I shrunk from the idea of aiding in such a scheme —my pride, my honour, my principles, alike revolted from it ; but the duke remained inexorable ; and a length, driven to despair, to distraction, I gave the required promise, consenting at the same time to relinquish the design I meditated of entering a conven again, and devote myself entirely to you.

"All matters being adjusted, the duke delayed not returning to Seville ; not omitting, however, previous to his departure, to despatch a letter to the marquis of Lerida, with an account of the death of his daughter, nor to inform me, in the course of few months, he should expect my return to the castle by which time he conceived his daughter's infant features would be sufficiently forgot, to prevent any danger of the deception he had practised, being detected.

"Having reason to believe, from various circumstances, that an open interference for Sir Lorenz would be unavailing, he had recourse to stratagem to effect his deliverance. By means of the Abbot, father Jerome, it was effected. In the character of his confessor, he was allowed access to him, and furnished him with means of wrenching the bars of his dungeon, and a disguise in which to escape, on freeing himself from it.

"I at length again bade adieu to my native towers, a last one, as it has since proved ; and which plundered and deserted by those I left behind me soon became a heap of ruins.

" But in vain, on my return to the castle, I endeavoured to ascertain the fate of Sir Lorenzo, after effecting his escape ; I could receive no satisfaction on this head from the duke ; and at length, tormented by anxiety, or rather yielding to a vague suspicion of having been deceived, began to watch him so closely, that one day, from a closet adjoining his study, and in which I had found means of secreting myself, I overheard a conversation between him and the Abbot, which discolorered to me, not what I desired to know respecting Sir Lorenzo, but that the dutchess was still in existence.

" In a state of mind that baffles description, undecided how to break to the duke the discovery I had made, yet determined on the measure, since neither justice nor humanity would permit me to remain silent on the subject of such wrongs, such sufferings as hers, I was quitting the place of my concealment, when the duke suddenly throwing open the doors of the apartment he was in, discovered me : what his look, what his manner were at the instant, you who have seen him in moments of irritation, of angry and conflicting passions, may better conceive than I describe, at finding a secret which involved all that was precious to him, his honour, his reputation for justice and humanity, was in possession of another person.

" His first impulse was to make me enter the apartment he had come from ; he then, after having vented in some degree his rage, by bitter reproaches for the baseness he had detected, a painful consciousness of which crimsoned my cheek at the moment, proceeded to say, he should use neither argument nor intreaty to induce me to silence on the discovery I had made, but content himself with merely stating that on confining it to my own bosom depended the life of him whom I so much regarded, the life of Sir Lorenzo, whom he now confessed being confined in

the castle, as an hostage for the observance of the engagement I had entered into with respect to you; then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, in a milder accent added, that when I heard the explanation he had to make, I perhaps would not consider his conduct with regard to the dutchess quite so culpable as I now did. ‘Soon after my departure from the castle,’ he said, ‘circumstances had occurred to induce a belief of the dutchess allowing too great a degree of attention to be paid her by a young knight who visited there, and which occasioning him to watch her actions, in a manner he never before had done, he not only ascertained its being a correct one, but that an elopement was actually in agitation. After such a discovery,’ he continued, ‘a discovery which warranted the most injurious suspicions I could possibly entertain of her, to think of continuing under the same roof with her, was impossible; yet convinced that a public separation would afford her opportunities of making allegations, which the malevolence of the world might incline it to credit, I at length resolved, as the only expedient I could devise for effecting our separation, without unpleasant consequences resulting from it, to induce a belief of her death, and confine her for life in a part of the convent calculated for the purpose: this plan, by removing her to another habitation, I had no difficulty in carrying into effect; her death was universally believed; and while her supposed funeral was taking place, I conveyed her to the convent, there to remain under the care of the abbot. After proceeding such lengths, you may rely on it, no human power shall, by argument or entreaty, prevail on me to restore her to the world, more especially as my persuasion of her infidelity prevents my feeling any compunction for my conduct to her; nor would my deadliest vengeance fail of overtaking the person who should interfere re-

specting her.' Alas! of this I was but too thoroughly convinced," continued Olivia, "to have the courage to act as I wished on the occasion; mere suspicion not warranting, in my opinion, the punishment inflicted on the unfortunate dutchess: but he had that life in his power which was dearer to me than my own; and this consideration at length wrung from me a reluctant, but solemn promise, to conceal a knowledge of the affair.

"Satisfied with knowing Sir Lorenzo was indeed in safety, I was soon led to desist from remonstrating with the duke on the subject of his confinement, by the reflection, that his enlargement would probably but afford him an opportunity of imbruining his hands in blood; nor once made an effort to see him, lest, in the agitation I was aware the interview would occasion, I might betray my still retaining sentiments of a too tender nature for him.

"These sentiments, or rather the anguish they occasioned, was in time gradually weakened by the feelings you inspired, the interest you excited, the effect your innocent endearments had upon me—endearments which at once entwined you round my heart, and communicated to it that delicious sensation, which we experience, when after being led to consider ourselves valueless in the creation, we suddenly behold an eye of love and reverence uplifted to us.

"The dutchess lingered many years in her confinement; in her last moments, her previous asseverations of her innocence were repeated, in a manner too solemn to permit a doubt any longer to be entertained of it; from infancy she had known the young knight she was suspected of favouring as a lover; and this circumstance, united to a high opinion of his worth, led to a confidence which induced his offering to assist her in obtaining the protection of her friends.

" What the feelings of the duke were on this occasion, I cannot pretend to say ; mine were of the most acute nature, as from my privity to her sufferings, I could not forbear considering myself accessory in some degree to them, an idea that filled me with remorse. She was interred in the tomb in the subterraneous chapel, the same at which you found me kneeling this evening, and to which, under the influence of this feeling, I have often been led to offer up my prayers for her repose, to bathe the cold marble which enshrines her with tears of pity and regret, and implore her forgiveness for the wrongs I conceive I have been accessory to her sustaining, by my concealment of them.

" The Abbot was the person who gave me an account of her last moments, never indeed hesitating to answer any inquiry I chose to make concerning her, evidently from a wish to ingratiate himself into my good opinion, but which he has vainly sought to obtain ; my soul still shrunk from the thoughts of forming an alliance with his, in consequence of the suspicious light in which his sanctioning the duke's unjustifyable conduct to the dutchess caused me to regard him ; and had I been inclined to grant him my esteem, the motive to which I at length ascertained his solicitude to obtain it owing, would have withheld me : by degrees, I plainly perceived that it was entirely from a wish to obtain my interest with you for his young friend Rodolph it proceeded, for whose advancement in life he has ever manifested an extraordinary anxiety—extraordinary, unacknowledged as is any tie between them, and incapable as, from my observations on him, I conceive the Abbot of a disinterested attachment : 'tis a mystery, however, I have never felt solicitous to develop, owing to the little interest I feel for others.

" That the duke would have availed himself of the power vested in him, from its being endowed by his ancestors, to appoint him to the rank he holds in the convent, I cannot think, but that he knew no other person to whom the secret concerning the dutchess could so safely be entrusted ; since, to my eye, treachery lurks beneath his smile, and every look indicates hypocrisy.

" I have little more to add," resumed Olivia, " than to observe, that it always seemed to me, as if nature wished to favour the deception respecting you, from your astonishing likeness to the duke—astonishing to me, acquainted with the secret of your real birth ; never have I seen so perfect a one ; and that the solicitude I felt for your union with the noble Ferdinand, from a full conviction of his worth, was heightened, when I really knew who he was, in consequence of my wish to see him in possession of that fortune, which, though he did not require, my knowledge of his legal claim to rendered me desirous he should possess.

" A thousand times, when witnessing the agonies you endured at the thoughts of being compelled to give him up, owing to your idea of his being the destroyer of your father, have I been on the point of undeceiving you, but was still withheld by the solemn manner in which I had bound myself to silence on the subject.

" From that silence, however, I conceive I have been fully absolved, by the mysterious circumstances you disclosed to me. May the discovery I have made be productive of happiness to you ! I will indulge a hope to that effect ; means may be found of convincing Don Ferdinand of his unhappy error, without risking his safety, and all may yet be well.

" A few words more, and I have then done. The anguish I experienced at your sufferings, was aug-

mented by my incertitude of the fate of Sir Lorenzo, who, about the time the duke expired, disappeared from his confinement—a confinement I never ventured to approach, fearful if I did, either of his reprobation for being accessory to it, or else the revival of sentiments I had with difficulty suppressed; nor was heard of again, till the news of his unexpected appearance at Lisbon reached Seville. I tremble to think of his perishing in the flame which he has been instrumental to kindling; yet cannot wonder, when I review his provocations, that he should risk all for the accomplishment of his revenge. Crimes like the lady Leonora's, and her perfidious uncle's, merit exemplary punishment; and in the disgrace which has overtaken one, and the dreadful fate that has befallen the other, mankind will see, that the punishment of guilt, though sometimes slow, is almost ever certain, and generally the heavier, the longer it is delayed. In short, as that divine poet, whose immortal works we have perused together with such exquisite delight, says,—

“ ———When Heaven’s revenge is slow,
Jove but prepares to strike the fiercer blow.

CHAP. XVI.

Methinks Suspicion and Distrust dwell here,
Staring with meagre forms, through grated windows ;
Death lurks within, and unrelenting Punishment ;
Without, grim Danger, Fear, and fiercest Power,
Sit on the rude old towers and gothic battlements ;
While Horror overlooks the dreadful wall,
And frowns on all around.

Rowz.

“ Oh ! that a mind so noble as the duke’s should have suffered itself to be so perverted by an unjust prejudice,” cried Elvina, when a little recovered from the effect produced on her by the agitating disclosure of Olivia—“ I see I must relinquish the title of his daughter ; but never, no never, can my heart forego the love and reverence it bears his memory, a love and reverence I felt for him, long ere he authorized me to call him father. But of my real parents you have not yet,” with trembling anxiety she added, “ given me any satisfactory information ; do they yet live, or am I still to consider myself an orphan ?”

“ Would that I could relieve your anxiety on this head,” returned Olivia, “ but in vain have I tried to ascertain their fate ? the duke peremptorily interdicted me from ever mentioning them in his presence, from that repugnance, no doubt, we feel to hear the names of those we are conscious of having injured ; and at Seville, or in its neighbourhood, they have not

been for years : at a castle, however, belonging to them on the road to Jaen, you probably might learn some tidings of them."

" Thither then," said Elvina, " will I immediately bend my steps ; this is not a business that admits of a moment's delay, justice demanding my immediate resignation of this castle, and its domains ; and ere I dispose of myself elsewhere, I wish to know whether I have an unquestionable right to do so. Ah ! if Heaven has spared my parents, and if they prove what I wish to find them, some little share of happiness may yet be mine."

Olivia concurred in the necessity there was for an immediate effort for ascertaining their existence : it was accordingly determined, that at an early hour the ensuing morning, she should depart for their castle ; and the necessary preparations for the journey were immediately ordered, but without a hint transpiring of the discovery that had taken place ; not wishing to subject herself, at present, to the inquiries and observations that might follow its disclosure.

After some deliberation, she decided on leaving Olivia behind her, notwithstanding the comfort and support she knew she should derive from her presence ; but Don Felix de Hara, the legal heir, as it now seemed, to the Osma estates, and whom, in pursuance of her previous determination of making them over to him, she had invited to the castle, was now momentarily expected at it ; and it was necessary, therefore, that some one should be there to receive him ; this consideration, therefore, influenced her to forego the consolation she would have derived from her being the companion of her journey.

The remainder of the night, for neither were in a state of mind to be able to think of rest, was consumed in recapitulating past events, and forming uncertain conjectures respecting future ones : and at

the appointed hour, with a heart weighed down with the most oppressive feelings, a thousand fond regrets and tender recollections, a thousand fears for the future, and anxieties for the present, Elvina, with faltering steps, and eyes suffused with tears, stept into the carriage prepared for her, accompanied by one waiting-women, and a few attendants on horseback.

She endeavoured to subdue her emotions ; but when she reflected, that the beloved residence she was quitting she must no more approach as a home, that she had no certain prospect of finding another open to receive her, that dependance must be her lot, should her parents be dead, the bitterness of her feelings overcame her ; and in the anguish of a wofraught mind, she wept aloud.

Her attendant, at once alarmed and surprised, exerted herself alike to assuage her sorrow, and divine its cause ; but she failed in her attempts at each ; the surcharged heart of Elvina required this event for its feelings, and to the inquisitiveness of curiosity her ear was closed. At length, relieved by the tears she shed, she again raised her drooping head, and from the changing objects that met her view, endeavoured to derive amusement ; but vain was the effort ; the mind must be abstracted from care, to be able to pay attention to what does not immediately interest it ; scenes, which at another time would have elevated her heart to rapture, awakened all her natural enthusiasm, and lifted her rapt and swelling soul, borne on devotion's wing, to nature's God, first source of all things lovely, all things good.

Eternal, Infinite, before whose throne
Sits sovereign Bounty, and through Heaven and earth,
Careless diffuses plenitude of bliss,

were not viewed with the dull and vacant eye of sorrow, or else with a gush of tears, at the recollections

they revived, from the resemblance she here and there traced between them and those she was quitting : but at length she was roused from her mournful abstraction, by the sudden illness of her companion, who, every moment becoming worse, she was at last obliged to drop her at an inn, leaving one of her escort to attend her.

Left to the uninterrupted indulgence of her melancholy reflections, they every moment became more painful. With dismay, she thought on the possibility there was of her parents not being in existence ; with still greater, on the possibility of time having wrought such a change in their feelings for her, as to prevent her restoration to them ; if indeed, living being considered as a welcome circumstance : but even if in existence, and all that her warmest wishes could desire, still she felt, that situated as she was, with regard to her lover, her happiness must be imperfect. " Ah ! Heavens !" she exclaimed, in the bitterness of her soul, as she thought of his cruel letter, " at what a moment have I discovered that no obstacle exists to our union ! at the very moment in which he assures me it is his determination to tear my image from his breast, from a conviction of my unworthiness any longer to hold a place in it ! Yet, perhaps," and a gleam of joy shone on her soul at the bare idea, " means may be found, as Olivia has said, of dissipating his suspicions—of convincing him of the injustice he has done me, in ever harbouring a doubt of my truth ; pride might forbid the vindication, but that I am too sensible of the grounds there were for his injurious surmises, not to pardon them."

Towards sunset, she found herself in a hollow road, between mountains of immense magnitude ; gloomily overshadowed, in some places, with woods of pine and chesnut ; in others, thinly scattered with ponderous cork trees, or shooting high above the

dusky shade, in all the awful grandeur of barren sublimity, their bases bespread with prickly shrubs, and impenetrable thickets.

The further she advanced within this defile, the wilder and more savage appeared the aspect of the scenery. At length, as the sun declined, and the lengthening shadows of the mountains, the deepening gloom of the woods, and the gradual cessation of the busy sounds that had remotely fluctuated on the ear by day, began to announce the approach of night ; and she, every now and then, found herself shut in from the face of heaven, by projecting and cavated rocks, where the scanty light, that dimly gleamed upon the spot, served but to display their threatening brows, and the suspicious obscurity of the paths that strayed amongst them : fears of the most agitating nature began to seize her, and yielding to their influence, she was on the point of stopping the carriage, to inquire whether there was no way of avoiding the dangers she dreaded, by stopping for the night, when one of her attendants, riding up to it, informed her that the castle of Lerida was just at hand ; and immediately after, the road expanding, she beheld, directly facing her, the turrets of an ancient edifice, rising to her view above the high wall that encompassed it : but the emotion experienced at the moment was quickly lost in the chilling sensation excited by the gloomy aspect of the building ; nothing could exceed its air of desolation ; the battlements, lost in many places amidst the mass of years, every where exhibited the effects of either neglect or time ; the few windows that looked above the wall were shattered ; the wall itself, mouldering and gapped, was overtopt by long streaming grass ; all the paths about it appeared long untrodden ; not a vestige of inhabitant was to be discovered from it ; and altogether, *it seemed* infinitely more calculated for the perpetra-

tion of deeds of darkness, than the enjoyment of social comfort.

"They must be dead, or else have entirely abandoned it," said Elvina to herself, as her eye glanced over it; "nothing else could have reduced it to such a lamentable state of decay."

Under this impression, she felt almost surprised at finding the application for admission noticed; the carriage scarcely stopt ere the folding gates were unclosed, and a spacious court displayed to her view; but from which she almost instantly withdrew her eyes, to turn them again upon the porter, who, to her tremulous interrogations, replied, the marquis and marchioness were not only living, but at that very moment there.

The agitation produced by this information, for a moment took from her the use of her faculties; then a little recovering herself, and reflecting on the necessity there was for composure, in order to get through the discovery she had to make, in the clear, the explicit manner she wished, she endeavoured to collect herself; and the carriage having crossed the court through heaps of weeds, intermingled with fragments of the building, alighted, but for a minute after was unable to move, from the violence of her emotions: then motioning to the servant who had been summoned to usher her to the marquis and marchioness to lead on, she slowly followed him; not without wishing, oh how fervently wishing! for the supporting presence of her Olivia at this awful moment—awful from being the one that was about restoring her to her real parents, divesting her of the privileges she had lately enjoyed, and subjecting her again to uncontrolled authority.

Near the end of a long hall, paved with black marble, and hung with a few warlike trophies, and some pieces of ancient armour, gleaming in the evening

beam that gained admission through the western windows, the attendant threw open the door of a large apartment, and gave to her view the marquis and marchioness of Lerida.

But oh ! how different in look, in voice, and manner, from the beings she expected to have seen, from the account received of them from Olivia, who, though not personally acquainted with them, had yet, from the report of others, been able to answer her minute inquiries respecting them ; assuring her, in reply to her questions, that they had always been represented to her as truly amiable and engaging.

The marquis, tall even to awkwardness, and attired in a slovenly manner, yet with an affectation of finery, was of a gaunt and ferocious aspect. In vain Elvina looked for something of dignity of mien, or candour of expression ; his gait was stooping, and from beneath enormous and overhanging brows, his eyes, dark, small, and deep set in his head, just peeped out, as if anxious to make observations, yet desirous of avoiding them, while his lady, tall, meager, and faded as himself, with features equally harsh, and a voice not less unpleasant than her countenance, instead of displaying that elegance, or any of those striking indications of internal refinement, and elevation of sentiment, which Elvina expected to have beheld, was loaded with tawdry ornaments, neither suitable to her rank or time of life ; and both in her looks and manner, her evident affectation of youthful alertness, and the simpering air with which she spoke, evinced a degree of levity equally unbecoming either.

Elvina, as she gazed, could not forbear repenting her precipitancy—could not forbear regretting, that instead of trying to ascertain what they had been, she had not endeavoured to ascertain what they now were, ere she made any effort towards introducing herself to them : it was now, however, too late.

draw back ; and trying to overcome the sensation they had excited, trying to hope she should yet find them entitled to her love and reverence, to that homage which, in obedience to the voice of Nature, she wished to pay them, she accepted the seat, which they mutually assisted in pulling forward for her ; and having expressed her conviction of the surprise they must be under from her unexpected visit, proceeded to say, she would, as succinctly as possible, explain the cause of it ; and accordingly, without further delay, entered upon the communication she had to make.

They listened to her with the most profound attention, or rather, in uninterrupted silence ; their looks from time to time wandering about, as if impatient for the conclusion of her relation—a relation more than once impeded by her emotions, but which she had no sooner come to, than both starting up, they almost overwhelmed her with caresses, but which she could not even make an effort to return.

At length perceiving her nearly overcome, they permitted her to resume the seat from which, on the conclusion of her narrative, she had risen, for the purpose of throwing herself at their feet ; and as soon as she was a little recovered, the marchioness drawing a chair close to her, began again to express the great joy which this unexpected discovery of their relationship gave her.

" Ah ! it's a true saying," she cried ; " we should never despair of any thing in this life ; for who could have thought this morning, when my lord Marquis and I, according to custom, were bemoaning the want of an heir to our fine estates, that before night we should have such a child as you ! Well, it was a wicked thing, to be sure, of the Duke to rob us so long of you ; but no matter now ; he is gone where he

must now pay for all ; yes, yes, he smarts now for what he did amiss here."

" Oh ! speak not in this manner," exclaimed Elvina with vehemence, and something of mingled horror and indignation in her look ; " disturb not the sacred ashes of the dead ; defame not the departed spirit ; revile not the memory of him whom I must forever love and reverence."

" Well, well, I shall say nothing more about him," replied the Marchioness ; " he is gone, to be sure, and so, as you say, let him rest in peace. It does not seem, indeed, as if you had any thing to say against him : but don't grieve because you must give up his name ; you'll be no loser by having found another father ; no, no, the Marquis of Lerida might hold up his head any day with the Duke of Osma."

Still more astonished, still more disgusted at what she heard, at what she saw, Elvina now doubted the evidence of her senses, now almost sunk beneath the overwhelming anguish she experienced, at finding herself the daughter of parents, whom every feeling of her soul revolted from acknowledging as such.

Unaccustomed as she had been to any thing like unkindness, still she felt she could much better have endured it, than this dreadful coarseness of manner, this total want of all those elegancies, those refinements, she had hitherto met with in the society she moved in, and, till the present moment, deemed inseparable from exalted rank, and an enlarged education.

Any thing, in short, would have been preferable to this total dissimilarity of manners ; and again she regretted her precipitancy, again regretted having so unadvisedly thrown herself into their power, and thus subjected herself to the dreadful warfare of contending feelings, the dreadful necessity of dissimulating ; *for never, never, she was almost firmly convinced from*

what had just passed, could her heart experience, for the Marquis and Marchioness, those sentiments the nearness of their connexion gave them a right to expect from her.

Rather than live in such a state, she felt she would prefer the endurance of any privation to which worldly want could subject her—prefer to have “the bare earth for her resting-place, its roots her food, some cleft her habitation.”

Sinking beneath her feelings, or rather fearful she should not be able much longer to restrain them as she wished, she declined partaking of any refreshment; and under the pretext of extreme fatigue, requested to be allowed to retire to her chamber.

No opposition was made to this request; and conducted by the Marchioness, who refused to let any other person be called for the purpose, she ascended, by a decayed staircase, to a gallery above, destitute alike of furniture or ornament, and at the extremity of which was the apartment allotted her.

The Marchioness tendered her assistance in undressing; but equally unable to think of rest, and anxious to be alone, Elvina declined her offer; and begging she might not detain her from the Marquis, had the satisfaction to see her withdraw, not, however, without saying, she expected to see her as blithe as a bird in the morning.

Left to her sorrowful reflections, Elvina abandoned herself to the anguish that oppressed her. Agonizing as were the sufferings she had experienced, yet the misery of the present moment was more acute, since a misery for which she could not look for sympathy, owing, as it was, to a cause she durst not vow.

“To but one faithful bosom,” she ~~had~~ voluntarily cried, “could I impart the nature of it; and in that bosom again, I may never perhaps have an opportunity of reposing my sorrows. Wretched as I was a

few days ago, yet, comparatively, I was then happy to what I am now, since then, not only in the enjoyment of the soothing society of my Olivia, but ignorant of any necessity for dissembling my feelings. Oh! to be restored to that society, to the free, the uninterrupted enjoyment of it, is now all I ask of fate."

Yes, crossed in her hopes, humbled in her expectations, sickening still more at the thoughts of remaining where she was, she felt she could cheerfully acquit fortune of all further obligations, to be allowed to rejoin her Olivia, and with her, in some calm retreat, some cloistered solitude, pass the remainder of her life—felt to be relieved from her present situation, there was no sacrifice almost she could not make.

With increasing astonishment, she dwelt on the cause of her present unhappiness. That the marquis and marchioness should be so totally unlike what she expected to find them, not only from the representations of Olivia, but their elevated rank in life, was to her a matter of unequalled amazement—a circumstance so strange, so almost incredible, as almost to induce a belief of being under some illusion, and at length, to excite a suspicion of being imposed on, a suspicion which, gaining ground every moment, became at length so confirmed, as to decide her on determining, if possible, to quit the gloomy walls that now enclosed her, the ensuing day.

Yet for what purpose, the imposition she suspected, or rather believed, could possibly be intended, or by whom contrived, was beyond her power to conjecture.

Amidst the conjectural fears, however, the idea of it excited, a gleam of joy pervaded her mind, at the thoughts of finding herself unbound, by any tie, to beings whom she felt it to be utterly impossible she could ever look upon with esteem or veneration.

But it was but a gleam; her thoughts quickly re-

verting to the dangers she apprehended, terror began to seize her, and her eye, obeying the impulse of her soul, rolled round the room in eager examination of it; nothing met her view, however, to add to her emotion ; she saw no other door but the one by which she had entered, and which a bolt afforded her the means of securing, in some degree.

Still, however, she continued in all the perturbation of fear, aware, if any immediate evil was intended, no bolts or bars, she could here make use of, would avail to guard her from it ; to have known what it was she had to dread, would have been some relief, since no dangers are so terrific, as those to which our imagination is allowed to give a shape : trembling she leaned against a window, which overlooking the wall, afforded her a view of the wooded summits of the mountains, just beginning to catch the silver rays of a rising moon.

But her mind was not in a state at present to acknowledge the soothing influence of such a scene ; yet involuntarily, and with tears of bitterness, she reflected on the hour in which it would have calmed every uneasy feeling—at once tranquillized and elevated them ; now she could only notice it, to sigh at the affecting contrast which its repose, the solemn stillness, interrupted but at intervals by the faint murmurs of the wind, or the owl's foreboding cry from the battlements immediately above her, and which, as it pierced the fearful hollow of her ear, caused, in spite of herself, a shuddering sensation, formed to the agitation of her mind.

At length, the sounds which had remotely reached her, at intervals, from other parts of the building, ceased ; and persuaded, from the circumstance of not hearing them repeated, after listening a considerable time, that she had nothing immediately to apprehend, she ventured to throw her exhausted frame upon the

bed, where, worn out with fatigue and agitation, sleep soon closed her eyes, but not a sleep from which she derived any benefit ; visions of horrid import haunted her fancy, and suddenly starting from her restless pillow, she beheld, with a sensation of gladness, the morning beam.

CHAP. XVII.

Oh ! oh ! answer me ;
Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell,
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in earth,
Have burst their cerements ? why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly interr'd,
Has op'd its ponderous and marble jaws,
To let thee out again ? What may this mean,
That thou, dear corse, again in complete steel,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon ?

SHAKSPEARE.

RECOLLECTING the necessity there was for expedition and secrecy, in the design she had in view, she softly unclosed the door, and with noiseless steps proceeded along the gallery, descended to the hall, where, finding one of the domestics of the castle, she tremblingly approached him, to inquire for her attendants, and to her unutterable consternation, was informed, that they had quitted it, by the first glimpse of day, in pursuance of the orders of his lord.

Ready to sink from the shock this information gave her, since, through their means, she had hoped, in some way or other, to have been extricated from her present situation, yet fearful of betraying the feelings it excited, lest the discovery of her apprehensions, by awakening the suspicions of those from whom she wished to escape, might render that escape still more difficult of accomplishment, she slowly reascended the stairs, vainly trying to devise some project for it.

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her heart yet throbbed with dismay, and her lips were pale and quivering from emotion, she was joined by the marchioness, who, after expressing her regret at seeing her look so ill, but in too hasty and careless a manner, to allow her to think she was sincere in what she expressed, said, since she was drest, they need not delay joining the marquis, who was already in the breakfast-room.

Elvina silently acquiesced, not without a hope, that something, in the course of conversation, might transpire, explanatory of the real nature of their designs against her, if indeed the moment for fully developing them was not yet arrived.

As she again advanced down the gallery, the marchioness, as if she supposed her silence owing to the observations she was making on the desolate appearance of all around her, the walls being here not only completely stript, but in many places irreparably injured, facetiously observed, their castle was rather the worse for the wear ; adding, however, that things couldn't last for ever ; and as they meant almost immediately to quit it, for a very fine one they had near Madrid, it was no matter ; "where," pursued she, "you'll see something of life, something more than you did at the palace of Osma, amongst its old dunnas and rusty ushers."

Elvina found the Marquis, as, from not knowing any other title to give him, she still continued to style him, in the apartment into which she had been ushered the preceding evening, and which she now perceived opened into a spacious garden, but exhibiting, in wildly tangled shades, mutilated statutes, and walks overrun with grass and weeds, like the building itself, the most chilling proofs of neglect and desertion.

In the anxiety with which she regarded his countenance, and which, seen as it now was in the broad glare of day, appeared still more forbidding than it

had done the preceding night, Elvina scarcely noticed his salutation; and tremblingly sinking into the chair he tendered for her, felt ready to burst into demonstrations of the feelings that oppressed her.

She was scarcely seated, when the opening of a door behind her, leading to the garden, causing her to turn round, she beheld Don Rodolph entering.

Her perplexity as to the purpose for which the imposition, she was now so thoroughly persuaded of, had been planned, was instantly removed; with the suddenness of lightning, it flashed upon her mind, the instant she beheld him; yet, how he could flatter himself so despicable a contrivance would ultimately further his views, if, indeed, he did not mean to have recourse to violence, as she but too justly apprehended, she could not imagine; neither by what means he had obtained a knowledge of the circumstances, which no doubt had suggested it to him. This, however, was at present of little consequence to know; treachery there certainly had been somewhere, but in what quarter, it mattered not to ascertain, till extricated from the dangers in which it had involved her. Her first object was to endeavour to disengage herself from the toils, which had been but too successfully spread for her; but when she reflected how remote she was from all who could have assisted her in the effort, her heart almost died within her, and with difficulty could she suppress the emotions by which it was agitated, and which she deemed it essential to conceal, lest a suspicion of any premature one, at her side, should either occasion the mask to be immediately dropt, or else such obstacles in the way of any effort at escape, as to render it impossible.

She could not, however, command herself sufficiently, to avoid shrinking back at his approach, with a look of mingled scorn and reproach—a look which, from the sudden dropping of his eyes, seemed to pe-

etrate to his soul, and heightened the confusion he was evidently under.

" You are surprised, I perceive," said the Marquis, eying her but half askance, " at seeing Don Rodolph here, but you must know he is a relation of ours, though, till very lately, I knew nothing of the latter : his mother, a kinswoman, of mine, married young gentleman, whose father having forbid their marriage, they thought it prudent to conceal it till his death ; she, however, died first ; it was not till the other day, the old gentleman gave up the ghost, when Don Rodolph's father, making himself known to him, & no sooner learnt who he was, than out of respect to his mother, he came to pay his compliments to us."

" But if you are surprised at seeing him," added the marchioness, " it must be agreeably, I am sure, or nothing can be pleasanter, than to meet with a friend unexpectedly."

" Nothing indeed," emphatically assented the agitated Elvina, vainly wishing the enjoyment of such a happiness had been hers at the moment.

" May I then flatter myself," said Don Rodolph, raising his eyes, and in a soft and insidious tone, addressing himself to her, " that my unexpected appearance here has been productive of some little pleasure to you ?"

" Assuredly," returned Elvina, impressively, and with a look fraught with meaning, " if you can flatter yourself with ever having been considered as one of my friends."

Don Rodolph regarded her with earnestness for a moment, then biting his nether lip, and pushing back from the table, with a look at once sullen and indignant— " No," he exclaimed, in ruffled accents, " I cannot indeed boast of ever having received a proof of even common esteem from you."

" Well, no matter," cried the marchioness ; " she'll now make you amends for the past."

"Yes," resumed the marquis, "or I shall know the reason why. In short, not to mince the matter, or keep you another minute in ignorance of my intentions, know, the moment you discovered you were my daughter, I decided on giving you to my young kinsman here, in order to prevent my fortune going out of the family."

"And to be sure she can have no objection to such a measure," rejoined the marchioness.

"At least, none that I'll allow of," resumed the marquis; "no, no, she shall not show less obedience to my will, than she would have shown to that of the duke, had he been still living, and considered by her as her father: I can easily guess, from my knowledge of his temper, how he managed her."

"Whatever his temper or disposition might be," observed Elvina, "I never had reason to imagine he would have forced my inclinations; nor, had he made the effort, great as was my reverence and affection for him, would I have submitted to it, since nothing can in my opinion, justify the taking of vows which we cannot fulfil, the assumption of duties which we shrink from performing. Of the nature of my sentiments for him, Don Rodolph has long since been acquainted; they are unalterable; he will therefore save both himself and me much useless and disagreeable repetition, by immediately desisting from all further attempts to change them. I have already," she continued, after the pause of a minute, wishing to sound them, but in a tone far less energetic, "mentioned the expected arrival of Don Felix de Hara, the illustrious kinsman, and, as it now appears, heir of the deceased duke, at the castle of Osma, and should esteem it an obligation to be allowed to return there without delay."

"Very likely you might," said the marquis, in a gruff tone, and with a corresponding look, "but to

make you easy on that head, know, that it is my fixed determination, that beyond these walls you shall never go, till you become the bride of Don Rodolph."

Elvina gazed at him for a moment, then yielding to the indignation of her soul, was on the point of starting from her seat, to assert her right to quit them, when the probable consequences of such a step occurring to her, the little chance there was of any further temporizing measures on the part of Don Rodolph, if once apprized of the detection of his baseness by her, suddenly withheld her from it, not, however, without so completely subduing her, as to render assistance necessary.

As soon as she was sufficiently revived to move, Don Rodolph proposed her perfecting her recovery by repairing to the garden. Scarcely conscious of what she did, Elvina rose, and descended the steps leading to it; he followed, and keeping at her side, urged every thing which art could suggest, to try to render her propitious to his passion.

For a considerable time she appeared not to pay the least attention to him; then suddenly pausing, "I will put, then," she cried, "the sincerity of your ardent professions to the test: if you really love me, you must regard my happiness; in consideration therefore of its being essential to it, that I should be freed from your addresses, desist from all further importunities on the subject; enable me to return without further delay to the castle of Osma, and rely on it, that all that is in my power to grant you, my future friendship, shall be yours."

"And thus deprive myself of the power of prosecuting a suit which I am determined never to drop! No, no," he passionately exclaimed, "I must be a fool, indeed, were I to suffer myself to be prevailed on to expedite your departure, from a place which

furnishes me with opportunities I should seek elsewhere in vain for pleading my passion. Oh ! why, why continue so inexorable to it ? Oh ! why give me the pain of thinking, to parental authority I must be indebted for what, were worlds in my possession, I would cheerfully resign to voluntarily obtain ?”

Elvina, eying him with mingled contempt and indignation, could scarcely, at this indirect threat, forbear giving vent to her feelings—forbear betraying her knowledge of his baseness, and deriding the methods he had recourse to, for the furtherance of his views.

Persuaded, however, that doing so could answer no other end than that of exciting, perhaps, a transient shame, since she was now convinced he was as callous as perfidious, as insensible to remorse as capable of the perpetration of actions calculated to excite it, she checked herself ; and though again ready to sink beneath apprehension, walked on, without speaking.

Retaining his station at her side, he continued to address her, but without being able to extort a word in reply. To argument or expostulation with him, she determined not to descend again, since now convinced of the uselessness of either.

At length, indignant at her obstinate, her scornful silence, he ceased from his efforts to soften her in his favour ; but had scarcely done so, when suddenly seizing her by the robe, “ Not this way,” he exclaimed, in a horrid and disordered voice, “ you must not proceed in this direction.”

“ Not in this direction !” cried Elvina, involuntarily repeating his words, from the surprise excited by his manner, or rather looks, as she turned to survey him.

“ No,” he replied, in the same tone in which he had just spoken, his lips quivering, his countenance pale and haggard.

"And why not?" demanded Elvina, urged by an irresistible feeling to inquire, and casting her eyes forward, but without being able to penetrate the dusky shades that here rose clustering to her view.

He hesitated for a moment to answer; then, as if convinced there was a necessity for some kind of explanation—"If you must be informed," cried he, "know, then, that a fatal catastrophe took place in that part of the garden to which you were bending your steps, a few days ago, and which, from the impression made on my mind by the circumstance, renders it unpleasant to me to approach it again."

Elvina looked at him, as though she would pierce his soul. In the livid hue of his countenance, in his faltering accents, in the wild and fearful glances which he directed to the spot alluded to, she read evident proofs of conscious guilt—of the compunctionous visitings of nature—the terrors which still, from time to time, shake the soul of the flagitious; and with a dreadful, an appalling conviction of his having been instrumental to the perpetration of some dire deed there, if not the immediate perpetrator of it himself, she disengaged herself from his hold, and tottering forward to a pavilion she perceived at a little distance, threw herself, nearly fainting, on the seat.

"You look ill, you look alarmed," he cried, hastily following her, and now somewhat recovered from his own emotion.

"Ill!" repeated Elvina; "Oh, Heavens! how can I look otherwise than ill—otherwise than alarmed, when I think of being in the power of a——"

"Of what? of whom?" eagerly demanded Don Rodolph, on her recollecting herself sufficiently to prevent the dreadful epithet which hovered on her lips escaping from them.

" Of persons," she rejoined, after a moment's pause, and not without trembling at what the consequences of her temerity might have been, had she not checked herself in time, " who show little inclination to attend to my feelings. Hear me once for all, Don Rodolph, and let the avowal of my fixed determination induce you to favour my departure hence ;—no power shall influence me to give you my hand."

" Never, by Heavens !" exclaimed he, with all the vehemence of rage and malice.

" And is it thus," cried Elvina, wildly clasping her hands together, and in accents at once indignant and reproachful—" is it thus you requite the obligations you owe the deceased duke, by persecuting, by afflicting, by weighing to the earth, the being who was the object of his tenderest care and solicitude ? Oh ! though generosity should fail of influencing you, let the memory of the past have some weight with you."

" And why may I not as well say," returned he, " let my ardent passion have some effect upon your feelings ? Oh ! Elvina, if to promise implicit obedience to your wishes, to have no will but yours, can influence you to hearken to my vows, let me now give you the assurance, in this posture," throwing himself at her feet ; " let me swear to be subservient to you in every instance."

Elvina, starting back on his attempting to clasp his arms round her, passed round a table which occupied the middle of the pavilion, in order to prevent his intercepting her, and rushing from it, escaped to that part of the garden they had just come from.

Anxious to disappoint his pursuit, still more to discover whether there was any outlet, by which she could extricate herself from him, she hurried onward, regardless of the impediments which the branching

roots of trees, rising high above the soil, and tangled thickets, grotesque and wild, threw in her way, till she at length found herself in a small glade, surrounded by the funereal gloom of trees of deepest verdure, matted together in wild luxuriance—

Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm.

Scarce had she gained it, ere struck by the idea of this being the spot so dreaded by the conscious Rodolph, she eagerly, as well as involuntarily glanced over it, and with a shuddering sensation, perceived the earth had lately been disturbed in one particular place, and near it, half buried in the withering grass and weeds thereabouts uprooted, a broken mattock.

For a moment she hesitated to approach it, fearful of augmenting the terrors she already labored under, by the sight of some ghostly object; then urged forward by an impulse too strong to be resisted, by something like an inward voice, propelling her to the discovery, she ventured to advance, and moving the earth with her foot, beheld a human form beneath; but the thrilling horror of the moment was chiefly occasioned by the sight of the habiliments in which it was wrapt; stooping down, she eagerly uncovered the face, and beheld, as she had fearfully, shudderingly anticipated, the countenance of the young, the fair Dorinda.

"Oh! sight of horror!" she exclaimed, as tremblingly she sunk upon her knees, "murdered victim of the most inhuman artifices, is this the resting-place in which I find thee!"

Yes, it was but too evident that she had been spirited away from the castle, by the same mysterious means through which Don Rodolph had obtained knowledge of her proceedings, and sacrificed to his ambitious views and diabolical revenge.

"Oh! why did I suffer myself to be deceived?" she cried; why not doubt his artful statement, the authenticity of the still more artful letter fabricated for my inspection? But regret is unavailing; to avenge thy murder is the only way in which I can be consoled for my fatal credulity; the resistless impulse that led me to its discovery, gives me to hope, to believe, I may yet have that power; yes, injured spirit, unfortunate Dorinda, I may yet to thy manes be allowed to consecrate a tomb, commemorative alike of my regard, and the retributive justice of Heaven."

In the horror of her feelings, her blood froze in her veins, her senses began to wander, she fancied she saw the livid corse beginning to move in its shallow bed of earth, and with a faint shriek, started from the spot; but ere she had got many yards from it, dropt lifeless on the ground, overpowered by her sensations.

On reviving, she found herself reclining on a sofa in an apartment of the castle, and surrounded by Don Rodolph and his vile accomplices. They made an effort to learn, from her own confession, the cause of the state in which they had found her: but without appearing to notice their interrogations, she desired to be conducted to her chamber, and was accordingly supported to it, by the pretended marchioness, her indisposition alarming too much the selfish fears of Don Rodolph, to allow of his offering any opposition to her wish to retire.

Here, at her express request, she was left to herself. But solitude could not calm her mind; it only permitted her to reflect uninterruptedly on her situation, its horrors augmented by the recent discovery; phrensy almost seized her brain at the contemplation of it—"Yet let me not despair," she cried, as she threw herself on her knees to heaven, "that Being, to whom, in the hour of joy, my vows have still

been addressed, with equal fervour as the hour of sorrow, will not surely now forsake me : His arm is not shortened that it cannot save ; his ear is not heavy, that it cannot hear."

At the dinner hour she was invited to descend from her chamber, but refused. In the course of the evening she was again importuned to quit it, but repeated her refusal ; and at last, in order to obtain an opportunity of seeking for some means of escape, informed the mock marchioness, that feeling herself extremely indisposed, she was under the necessity of requesting her rest might not be disturbed, by any one's coming again to her chamber that night, except summoned by her.

The marchioness gave her the assurance she required, and a light being brought, left her to her agitating reflections ; from the indulgence of these, however, she soon started, to pursue her meditated search : favoured by the darkness in which all was now involved, she descended to the hall, and proceeded to a passage she had noticed, adjoining the parlour, and which, from its direction, she flattered herself would give her access to the garden, whence she scarcely doubted, or rather permitted herself to doubt, she should be able to effect her escape ; forgetting, in the anxiety of the moment, in her solicitude to avoid the dangers that threatened, those she might encounter in her flight.

In this hope, however, she was disappointed ; there was no egress from it to the garden ; and with a sinking heart, she was retracing her steps, when the "tumult of loud mirth," from the apartment with which it communicated, arrested them, and looking through a crevice, to which she was guided by the light that beamed through it, she beheld Don Rodolph, and the unprincipled instruments of his villainy ; seating themselves at supper ; there was no

attendant, and, from their manner, she judged their conversation to be of the most unconstrained nature ; for, from their all speaking at the same moment, she was not able, for some minutes, to distinguish what they said. At length, Don Rodolph, exerting his voice—" Notwithstanding the great stress you lay upon your parental authority, I yet cannot help thinking, my lord marquis," he cried, with an air of ridicule, " that it will prove insufficient to make your new daughter mine."

" What ! do you mean, then, after all the trouble you have been at, in the arrangement of this plan to impose upon her, to give her up ?" demanded, with abruptness, the fictitious marquis.

" Not so," returned Don Rodolph ; " I should be an egregious fool indeed, if, after all the trouble, as you observe, I have had on her account, I could permit myself to do so ; besides, independent of that, and many other considerations, my safety, after the discovery of this morning, demands my securing her mine."

" True," assented his bravo-like confidante ; " as her husband, she'll scarcely think of impeaching you."

" As her husband, I shall take care she sha'n't," cried Don Rodolph ; " but, prythee tell me, for I have never yet been fully informed on the subject, by what means was it the duke was led to imagine her not his daughter ?"

" Led to imagine her not his daughter !" The throbbing, wildly throbbing heart of Elvina echoed these words, and in intense anxiety to hear what followed, her respiration was almost suspended.

" Why, as to that, my Lord, I must refer your Lordship to my good dame Ursula, or, I beg her Ladyship's pardon for the familiarity of the expression, my lady marchioness here," bowing to her with

an air of ironical respect, “for she was the sole contriver and executor of the scheme that imposed upon him.”

“Then I must request the particulars from her,” rejoined Don Rodolph.

“Certainly, my Lord,” she replied; “nothing can give me greater pleasure than to oblige you.—You must know, I was born and brought up on the Lerida estate. At an early age, I married a husbandman belonging to the same place, but he died a short time after I became a mother, and the child speedily following, there was nothing to prevent my engaging myself as nurse to the marchioness of Lerida. Her Lord was appointed, just at this juncture, ambassador to England, and fearful the voyage might be too much for so young an infant, she decided on leaving it under the care of her kinswoman, the dutchess of Osma, till her return; accordingly we were both taken to the palace and left there; but I had not been long in my residence, when the nurse of the young lady Elyina did something to offend me, in consequence of which, I conceived such a spite against her, as to determine me on doing her an injury, if ever I had the power.

“Soon after I had formed this pious determination, a contagious disorder broke out in the palace, upon which the duke sent us both off to another residence; but his precaution with respect to her proved unavailing; She fell sick, and with her young charge, who was committed to my care till her recovery, I was then hurried to another place.

“Mine about this time began to decline, and her sickly appearance suggested to me the idea of making her the instrument of my revenge upon my enemy; in short, not to exhaust your patience, I conceived the project of changing the children, in hopes the altered appearance of the supposed lady Elvina

would draw upon her the displeasure of the parents, and occasioning her dismissal from the castle, deprive her of the many advantages she derived from her situation there, and which, both from hatred and envy, I could not endure her retaining.

"There was nothing to prevent my carrying this project into effect ; the infants were both so young as to render it next to impossible for any one to identify them who was not in the habit of seeing them continually ; and I knew the fears of the duke would prevent our being visited for some time by any one from the castle.

"To be brief, I did as malice had suggested ; nor was the deception ever suspected.

"My scheme to ruin my enemy succeeded. The altered appearance of the child was at length, in some degree, imputed to inattention on her part, and she was accordingly dismissed.

"Soon after I was induced, by an attachment I formed for his lordship there, Don Juan, also to take my departure from it ; but though I did not again become an immediate inmate of it, I did not long continue absent from its vicinity.

"Previous to our connexion, Juan was not only known to your lordship's father, father Jerome, but also stood high in his confidence." Elvina again started at these words. "Soon after it had taken place, the dutchess was committed to his care, and wishing for an attendant of her own sex for her, he deputed Juan to seek for one on whom they might depend. Juan immediately fixed on me, and accordingly, in consequence of his recommendation, I was installed in that office, suffering myself to be prevailed on by the liberal presents and liberal promises of the father, to quit Seville for apartments in the lonely part of the convent in which the dutchess was confined ; and where, from that period, we continued to reside till called

upon to personate the marquis and marchioness *of Lerida.*"

"What a fortunate circumstance the secret passages in the castle of Osma being known to father Jerome," observed Don Rodolph, on her concluding, "since but for it he never would have been able to obtain the knowledge so requisite for the furtherance of our design."

"They were revealed to him by the duke himself," said Juan, "that in case he had reason to apprehend any discovery respecting the dutchess, he might not be at a loss for a place to immediately convey her to, contrived between the thick walls of the building. They permitted him to range all over it without observation, and to discover, unsuspected, whatever was going forward in it.—But to return to the lady Elvina—I suppose it is your lordship's intention to disclose the real truth to her as soon as she is yours?"

"Certainly," answered Don Rodolph; "but till then I wish to conceal it, lest her repugnance to becoming mine should be heightened by a conviction that my passion is not quite disinterested; and though I know I can have recourse to violent measures, I would yet rather avoid them, from my unwillingness to add to her resentment."

"But at all events I suppose you will not much longer delay your nuptials," rejoined Don Juan; "so many things happen between the cup and the lip, that for my part, I think the sooner the knot is tied the better."

"I am of your opinion too," replied Don Rodolph, "and therefore resolved on not deferring the ceremony, let her continue inexorable or not, beyond the arrival of Father Jerome, who, you know, is expected, either tomorrow evening or early the ensuing day."

" You are right," cried Juan; " having caught her so cleverly in your net, 'twould be a thousand pities to let her escape from it."

" In the net indeed!" internally repeated the trembling Elvina, whom the rising of Don Rodolph from his seat now caused to hurry from her concealment. " In the net which they privily laid is my foot taken," she cried as she regained her apartment.

Yet, amidst the agitation, the terror of the moment, she could not help reflecting, with a sensation of delight, on her restoration to the loved title she had deemed herself deprived of, endeared by the tender sentiments she cherished for the memory of him to whom she bore it; yes, notwithstanding his many faults and offences—faults and offences, she sighed, she grieved to think of, so superior had the nobleness of his aspect, the elevation of his sentiments, made him appear in her eyes, to almost every other being, so strongly were her affections riveted to him, by the light in which she had always been taught to consider him, the mingled pride and pleasure with which he appeared to regard her, that spite of the revival of the obstacles, which the confirmation of their consanguinity occasioned, to her ever becoming Don Ferdinand's, she could not but rejoice at finding herself again the daughter of the Duke of Osma.

But transient was the indulgence of a pleasurable feeling—from what she had just heard, she saw no time was to be lost, in endeavouring to effect her escape; another day, and to hope to disengage herself from the toils in which she was entangled, would be useless.

Yet in what way was she to make an effort for the purpose? to think of winning over any one in the castle to her interest, would be idle, and almost ~~equally~~^{equally} so, she feared, to imagine by herself ~~st~~ steadfastly reliable to find any secret outlet from it. ~~im, whom ex-~~

With difficulty could she prevent the wild shrieks of despair from bursting from her heart, at the little probability there appeared of her being able to avoid the fate impending over her. A thousand times, in the distraction of her mind, did she call upon her Olivia—her Ferdinand, to save her.

As with disordered steps she paced the room, now wringing her hands despairingly, now with streaming eyes offering up her vows to Heaven, her robe was caught by a hook in the wall, and in pulling it away, she drew aside part of the tapestry, with which the chamber was hung, and which in many places was rent, and discovered beneath, a small door fastened with a bolt.

Trembling between hope and fear, she immediately tried to open it ; she succeeded in her effort, and beheld a desolate chamber beyond. Returning for the light, she advanced into it, and glancing round, perceived another door, nearly opposite the one by which she had gained admission, and secured in the same manner.

She did not find it quite so easy, however, to open this ; but despair lending her strength, she had at length succeeded in forcing back the bolt, which time had rusted in its fastenings, and a little way from it, beheld a steep and narrow staircase, which she immediately began to descend, not without a hope that Providence had at length heard her prayer, and in permitting this discovery, furnished her with the means of effecting her escape.

The stairs terminated in a low vaulted passage, which, from the mouldering appearance of its walls, evidently occasioned by damp, and the chilling air that pervaded it, now dimming her light, now threatening its total extinction, she felt almost convinced, ed, either led, led immediately to the subterranean day."

But no dangers she might encounter, no horrors she might experience in traversing them, could for a moment, intimidate or deter her from determining to prosecute, if possible, her search through them, for an outlet by which to escape.

Her imagination could not picture to her any thing half so dreadful as becoming the wife of the guilty and detested Rodolph.

The passage ended in another deep descent of stairs, terminating at a door likewise bolted on the outside ; but though heavy, the bolt readily yielded to her effort to draw it aside, and the door swinging back on its rusty hinges, disclosed to her view a gloomy chamber, evidently, from the ruggedness of the walls and roof, hollowed in the solid rock.

She was here obliged to move with still greater caution ; the pent-up vapours, and sudden draughts of air, still more endangering her light. Shading it with her hand, she eagerly looked round for some way of passing from this dreary spot, but without being able to discover one, till her eyes at length fell upon a grated door, enclosed between two walls, which projected some way into the chamber.

Instantly approaching it, she set down the light, in order to apply her strength to the bolt, which secured it towards the bottom. When in the very act of stooping to undraw it, slowly, silently rising to her view, appeared a human countenance.

She shrieked, and drew back ; then a little recovering herself, and reflecting on the probability there was, of its being some unfortunate victim to the cruelty of Don Rodolph, or his iniquitous confederates, whom she saw, was on the point of inquiring, but ere she had power to articulate a word, dropt lifeless on the ground, overpowered by the feelings she experienced, when, as her eye still more steadfastly regarded it, she beheld the features of him, whom ex-

ternally, as well as internally, she still mourned—the ghastly countenance of her deceased father!

On reviving, she fearfully raised her head from the ground, but perceiving the apparition still gazing at her, through the iron bars of the door, again shrieked and hid her face in her hands: then a little recollecting herself again and slowly raising herself on her knees, “In the name of the holy saints,” she exclaimed, “speak, say, who? what are you? do my senses wander? or has the grave indeed given up its dead?”

“Rather let me demand,” was the reply, “by what accursed means have you been drawn hither? why is it that I behold you in this den of guilt, this cell of misery? yet if the circumstances have not led to any fatal consequences to you, ‘tis one, perhaps, I should not grieve at, since one to which I may probably owe the preservation of my life: collect yourself Elvina, a tale of wonder awaits you: remove the impediment to my again enfolding you in my arms, and let us not waste minutes so precious as the present, in idle expressions of surprise.”

Elvina, almost frantically, obeyed him; the door was unbolted, and the next instant she found herself clasped in the dear embraces of him, whom but a minute before she had imagined mouldering in the tomb of his ancestors.

But oh! how was the rapture of the minute checked by the situation in which she discovered him, by the grief and terror it inspired!

“Oh! after this unexpected restoration,” she exclaimed, when wonder and emotion would again allow her to speak, “to have thee torn from me by the ruthless hand of murder, ‘twould be more than reason could support. But do I indeed again possess thee?” she continued, still more intently regarding him, *still more fervently returning his embrace*, “ra-

ther is it not some phantom of my imagination I behold, which quickly vanishing, will leave me involved in still deeper gloom and horror?"

Again he reminded her of the necessity of composure, again of the importance of the present moments ; and at last succeeded in drawing from her, but in a broken and unconnected manner, the story of her sufferings, and particulars of the imposition which had been contrived for the purpose of drawing her thither.

Dim as was the light which now beamed around them, and wild and agitated as were her feelings, she yet was able to perceive a strong expression of confusion in his countenance ; his sallow cheek, wasted by long suffering, and the consuming fire of smothered indignation, flushed by a sudden hectic, on her imparting to him the discovery made her by Olivia, but which, in the feelings excited by the particulars that quickly followed the communication of it, he seemed not only to cease regretting, but also to pardon.

Clasping her again to his bosom, with threefold rapture, on finding she was indeed his own, "Merciful powers!" he exclaimed, "this is indeed some amends for recent sufferings : yes," he continued, "to know you are indeed my daughter, is a source of unutterable transport, not only from the ardour of my affection for you, but as relieving me from the humiliating, the degrading consciousness of deception. A thousand times has the pride, the pleasure I took in you, been damped by the supposition of your not being mine ; but that drawback on my happiness in you is now removed, and terrible is the vengeance I meditate on those concerned in deceiving me."

He then a little checking himself, and perceiving, from the wildness of her looks and manner, that she was still ready to doubt the evidence of her senses,

in consequence of being still uninformed of the means by which he contrived to impose a belief of his death, or his motives for wishing it believed, proceeded to inform her :

“ Aware of things taking the course they did, convinced, from my knowledge of the character of Don Ferdinand, that he would be the avenger of his father’s injured honour, I determined on counterfeiting death, in hopes of embroiling his house still further with the partizans of mine, of whose revenging my supposed fall I could not doubt, except, indeed, the king showed some inclination to that effect, as I was rather tempted to think might be the case, from his perfect knowledge of their violence, and also for the purpose of still more securely pursuing my plans of meditated revenge on him.

“ Sir Lorenzo, whom I had merely detained as a hostage for the performance of Olivia’s promises, I resolved on making the instrument of this revenge : I well knew his return to Lisbon, at this critical juncture, when nothing but a doubt of the illegitimacy of the queen prevented the people from unanimously declaring in favour of the master of Avis, would occasion the loss of Portugal to John.

“ I accordingly lost no time in acquainting him with my intention. I entered his confinement at the very moment he was on the point of betraying himself to Don Ferdinand, who, but whether by chance or not, I never gave myself even the trouble of surmising, had approached it, and discovered him at a window.

“ Thirsting as he was for revenge, you may readily suppose he unhesitatingly concurred in all my plans ; every assurance I could desire he gave me, for assisting me in the design I had formed, of dispossessing John of the crown, and restoring the family of Pedro, not out of any regard to them, I confess, but

merely in consequence of the injury I conceived he had done me, in his preference of the marquis of Almeria to me.

"The traitor Jerome was my confidant in this, as in almost every other instance through life. Through his means I was conveyed to the convent on Ferdinand's quitting the field to procure me that assistance which I required not; through his means my wounds were pronounced incurable; and lastly, a belief of my death excited.

"The readiness, however, with which he appeared to enter into my plans was, in reality for the purpose of furthering his own.

"He regarded me as one of the chief obstacles to the accomplishment of his ambitious views respecting you; were I removed, ways might be found, he flattered himself, of either enticing or betraying you into a marriage with his son.

"But a transient absence was not sufficient. He knew my disposition too well not to know what he had to expect if, on my return, I found he had availed himself of it to bring about such an event. Besides, he feared allowing the prosecution of my projects, lest the irremediable ruin of my family should be the result. Accordingly, on my journey to Lisbon with Sir Lorenzo, he had us both waylaid. Sir Lorenzo was fortunate enough to effect his escape, but I was overpowered and conveyed hither to be put to death by the ferocious Juan.

"Juan, however, hesitated about my immediate destruction. Distrustful of the promises of his employer, he resolved on ascertaining their sincerity ere he deprived himself of the power of being revenged on him in case of their failure. In a word, he resolved on receiving the reward promised for the perpetration of the deed, ere he in reality perpetrated it.

"This he had the hardiness to avow to me; nor

was he less backward in disclosing the real character of the execrable Jerome, giving me to see that I had been at once the dupe of the most consummate baseness and art.

"I need not describe to you what my transports were at the discovery. My reason yielded at times to their violence, now and then affording me a short respite from my sufferings.

"But if still greater, I should still consider them sufficiently compensated, in being allowed to wreck my meditated vengeance on the traitor Jerome, and his miscreant son. But I will not, cannot doubt my being so: Heaven is too just not to allow me to avenge my wrongs. But to account to you for my intimacy with such a character:—Our acquaintance commenced in early life; we were educated at the same university, and for a considerable time after quitting it, engaged in the same pursuits. To this castle, now dreary, desolate, and the scene of the most dreadful atrocities, but then of festive hospitality, I frequently repaired with him, to enjoy the pleasures of the chace; and he, in return, partook at mine of the more refined ones of gay and elegant society.

"At length, a fatal catastrophe led him to embrace a monastic life, a life of all others he was unqualified for, from the natural licentiousness of his disposition, a licentiousness I unhappily gave him too amply the power of gratifying, from the situation I elevated him to.

"A grandee of the first rank fell in a combat with him, occasioned by the injury he had done his honour, in the seduction of his wife, and which, through the treachery, or more properly speaking, perhaps, fidelity of a domestic, he being absent at the time on a distant embassy, was betrayed to him; and in ter-

rör of the resentment of his powerful and exasperated family, he fled to a convent as a refuge from it.

" So artfully, however, did he conduct himself on this occasion, that to remorse I was led to ascribe what in reality was owing to cowardice ; nor hesitated to assure him of my protection, for the unhappy offspring of this illicit connexion, which the wretched mother, soon after its birth, found means to convey to him, fearful of the treatment it might experience from her own family, if allowed to remain in their power, from the light in which they must consider it.

" This promise I faithfully fulfilled : through my interest he was ennobled, and obtained a distinguished situation about the person of the king.

" But to return to the execrable father. About the period I conceived of immuring your mother, the superior of the convent of St. Ildefonso died, and I proposed elevating him to that dignity, on condition that he would aid me in it.

" 'Tis unnecessary to say, he joyfully acceded to the terms. Yet still so blindly prejudiced was I in his favour, as to believe that nothing but an ardent wish to oblige me could have induced him to submit to them.

" His son, partly brought up beneath his care, and to whom, as soon as he was of an age to be entrusted with the secret, he revealed the ties that connected them, he rendered, by his instructions and example, as great an adept in the art of dissimulation as he himself was.

" For, except a proficient in it, it is utterly impossible his real principles, as now developed by the discovery of the actions he has committed, should have remained unsuspected.

" His having the presumption to raise his eyes to you, was no doubt owing to the instigations of his father, who, proud and ambitious in the extreme, wish-

ed for his still further elevation, and in whose heart I have now ~~now~~ reason to believe he was the only being that ever excited the smallest degree of tenderness.

" So artfully, however, upon that, as well as every other occasion, did the unprincipled Jerome conduct himself, that on my expressing the indignation which the discovery of this presumption inspired, I was led to believe he not only as deeply resented it, but was till that moment ignorant of it.

" For the deep interest he ever appeared to take in whatever concerned Rodolph, the discovery of their connexion no doubt at once accounted to you ; as also that of his access to the secret passage of the castle, for the knowledge he obtained of your intentions."

" True," replied Elvina ; " and no doubt the mysterious warning I one night received in the garden, to beware of the supposed St. Valery, was owing to him, under a hope that if led to break with him, I might be induced to favour the addresses of his son ; and also the secret intimation received at court, of Don Ferdinand's intended visit to me. One thing, however, still remains inexplicable, and that is, my attendants being so readily induced to leave me, ignorant as they were of the motive of my journey here."

" That is easily accounted for," replied the duke ; " they were doubtless in the pay of Jerome, for Juan has informed me, that finding it more convenient to be supplied, from my castle, with the luxuries requisite for his midnight orgies, than elsewhere, he found means of subverting the principles of many of the domestics ; thus descending, through his agents, to meannesses, equal to the vices he committed in his own person."

"All that required explanation then, is now explained," said Elvina; "and it only remains to wonder at his consummate hypocrisy and wickedness, and pray for our final extrication from his toils."

"Of that I have little doubt," returned the duke; Juan, who visits me every night with provisions, fearful of approaching me at any other time, lest the secret of my being in existence should be discovered, will not choose to risk his life, by refusing to conduct us to the outlet there is from the subterraneous chambers. But so impatient am I for revenge, that though I know, from the murder of the hapless Dorinda, an ignominious death awaits the miscreant son as well as father, I could not prevail on myself to defer the immediate accomplishment of it on Rodolph, now that I have recovered my sword," glancing as he spoke towards another part of the cavern, where, for the first time, Elvina noticed one, lying among some scattered pieces of armour, "but for the fearful consequences I should leave you exposed to, if unhappily foiled in the attempt." Elvina shuddered at the bare idea, nor rested, aware of the impetuosity of his feelings, till she had extorted a solemn promise from him, not to attempt avenging their injuries, until beyond the power of those who had inflicted them.

Assured there was no danger of their being surprised, from Juan's nocturnal visit having been already paid, she could not think of quitting her newly-restored parent, till the approach of morning should render it requisite.

Seated beside him, on a projection of the rocky wall, she now gazed at him, with eyes suffused with tears of exquisite delight, now with an expression of wistfulness that seemed to say; she yet at times doubted the evidence of her senses.

Availing to sooth her, he proceeded to observe that the first transports of his indignation and

resentment against the king had subsided ; he in consequence rather rejoiced than otherwise, at being prevented carrying the projects which they gave rise to into full effect.

" Another change too, of a still more pleasing nature, perhaps, to you," with a faint smile he added, " has been effected in my feelings, by my having had time for reflection. Juan, who, though deaf to the voice of humanity, was not always so to that of curiosity, if, indeed, the feelings that suggested the inquiries deserve no other appellation, informed me of all that you and Don Ferdinand suffered since my supposed death : and so much has the information affected me, that I no longer feel reluctant to your union."

Trembling between hope and fear, Elvina could only by tears express what she felt at this declaration ; yet, notwithstanding the perturbation of her mind, she could not avoid reflecting on the happiness she should derive from it, if once relieved from her present terrors, since there was no longer any obstacle to her coming to a full explanation with Don Ferdinand ; all dread of the consequences she had apprehended, from the disclosure of Dorinda's story to him, being now done away, by the commission of the crime, which rendered Don Rodolph answerable at another tribunal than that of honour for his conduct to her.

But imperfect as was the happiness the unexpected declaration of the duke afforded her, it would have been yet less so, had she known the motive to which it was in reality owing ; had she suspected that his at length avowing a disposition to sanction the addresses of Don Ferdinand was occasioned, not by any abatement of his ancient prejudices, or admiration of his exalted character, but solely by an interested wish to strengthen himself, by an alliance with his powerful

house, lest some of his frustrated projects should unfortunately come to light, fortified by such an accession of interest ; and he flattered himself his enemies would in vain attempt his ruin.

If to be able to look into the human heart would save us at times from misery, the reverse would now and then be the case, since the mind of sensibility cannot perhaps experience a severer pang, than that inflicted by the detection of premeditated insincerity ; by discovering that the profession or promise which afforded it delight, from the generous motive to which it was ascribed, was solely dictated by a sinister one.

The already too heavily afflicted Elvina had not this pang to endure, from not being able to suspect the reality of her father's esteem for the noble Ferdinand, so natural to her did it seem, that his eyes should at length be opened to his exalted worth, or conceive him capable of interested views.

At length, a ray of light glimmering through a crevice in the side of the dungeon, warned them of the necessity of parting ; Elvina reluctantly obeyed the warning ; his unexpected restoration, and the danger he was in, endearing him still more to her filial heart. As soon as possible, he commanded her join him at night ; and at length she lingeringly bade him adieu.

CHAP. XVIII.

Revenge impatient rose.

COLLINS.

REGAINING her chamber, Elvina prostrated herself, to return her fervent acknowledgements to Heaven, for the double discovery of this eventful night.

But terror soon broke in upon the ardour of her devotion. Her mind was shaken by apprehension; her mind almost died within her, when she reflected on the probability there was of the arrival of Father Jerome that day; yet a little recovering from the dread that oppressed her, she tried to hope, tried to flatter herself, in order to prevent her feelings from entirely overcoming her, that even if it did take place, her tears, her entreaties might obtain her a short respite from the violence she expected to follow it, a respite which she trusted the goodness of Providence would enable her to turn to the account she wished.

But should the reverse be the case—the suggestion was too horrible to be dwelt on for a moment; she could not without madness pause for an instant on the inevitable consequences; a parent murdered perhaps in her very sight, and the execrable Rodolph forcing her to become his.

If her present feelings were capable of aggravation, it was at the torturing reflection of the dangers by which they were surrounded being entirely the result

of the conduct of the duke himself, entirely owing to his having suffered himself to be warped from the path of integrity and honour by unjust prejudice and revenge.

Yes, spite of the love and reverence she bore him, she could not but acknowledge to herself, that he had been highly culpable ; yet, whatever were his faults, his offences, she humbly, fervently trusted, his late, his present sufferings, would be considered as a sufficient expiation of them.

Young day poured in apace, and soon the sun looked forth, in boundless majesty, shedding the shining day,

“That burnished plays,
On rocks, and hills, and towers, and wandering streams,
High gleaming from afar.”

But Elvina was lost to every thing but the horrors of her situation, till startled by a knock at the chamber door ; fearfully she unbolted it, and the pretended marchioness made her appearance.

Drawing back with a look of surprise, “Why, I really believe,” cried she, “from your appearance, you have not been in bed all night. Mercy on me ! sure this is not the way in which you expect to get better.”

“If I appear to want rest so much then,” returned Elvina, falteringly, “leave me now to the enjoyment of it.”

“What at this hour? Oh, my lord Marquis and Don Rodolph expect you to breakfast.”

“’Tis impossible, impossible for me to join them,” cried Elvina, retreating from the door, as if fearful of her using violence to draw her from the room.

Somewhat alarmed by the wildness of her manner, Ursula immediately withdrew to report it to Don Rodolph ; and he, in consequence, fearful, if he did

not allow her harassed mind some little respite, of reducing her to a state, that would render abortive all his ambitious hopes respecting her, determined on leave her unmolested till the arrival of father Jerome, when he resolved on being decisive with her.

To dwell on the dreadful interval is unnecessary ; suffice it, father Jerome arrived in the evening, and the necessity he was under of returning the following day to the convent, confirmed his abandoned son in this resolve.

Accordingly, Ursula was again despatched to the chamber of the hapless Elvina, to desire her immediate presence below, but without informing her why.

But in vain she now strove to gain admission to her. Elvina, continually on the watch, from the moment the hour drew nigh, at which father Jerome, from what she had overheard, might be expected, had ascertained his arrival, and losing, in the unutterable dismay the circumstance excited, all self-recollection, all command over herself, or power to make those efforts for the suspension of her fate, which, while the danger was more remote, she had flattered herself she should have been equal to, immediately secured the door of her apartment, and now stood leaning against it, unable to speak or move.

Finding her efforts to gain admission, or obtain an answer to her repeated demands for it unavailing, Ursula at length descended to her employers, not without an apprehension of some fatal catastrophe having taken place within the chamber, an apprehension which immediately communicating itself to them, occasioned their directly proceeding thither.

The sound of their approaching voices restoring Elvina to animation, she fled towards the inner chamber ; but ere she had gained it, a sudden recollection of the dreadful, the appalling consequences likely to accrue from her seeking refuge there, made her draw

back, and letting fall the tapestry, which she had raised for the purpose of advancing into it, she turned to face her persecutors.

The door was burst open by the alarmed and infuriate Rodolph, and as he rushed in, followed by the fiend-like Jerome, the ferocious Juan, the equally savage and unprincipled Ursula, and some other of the instruments of their atrocities, Elvina involuntarily dropt on her knees, and with folded and uplifted hands, seemed silently to implore that mercy which her looks but too evidently indicated her despair of.

Rodolph, darting forward, snatched her from the floor, and detaining her in his arms, "Since gentle means have proved ineffectual," he exclaimed, "since even parental authority has interposed in vain in my behalf, wonder not at my having recourse to other measures to secure you mine."

"Parental authority!" repeated the struggling Elvina, roused to desperation; "and have you indeed the folly to believe you succeeded in deceiving me? are you indeed so senseless as to imagine," the lividness of terror yielding to the flush of contempt and indignation for a moment as she spoke, "that so gross an imposition could pass upon me? Had the reverse, however been the case, still would you have found me as inexorable as now. Think not of ever being able to overpower my abhorrence of you. Should you force me to the altar, to the laws of man as well as God will I appeal for the dissolution of the unhallowed union."

"Attend to her no longer," in the vehement accents of mingled rage and malice, and with looks that corresponded, now interrupted his iniquitous father. "Give yourself a right to check those unqualified expressions of hatred by becoming her master immediately."

At these words Don Rodolph made an effort to

force her to the door ; but acquiring strength from despair, she burst from his hold, and wrapping her arms round a pillar of the bed, clung to it ; he tried to tear her from it, but resisting his efforts, " Wretch!" he exclaimed ; " murderer ! with your hands reeking with the blood of your innocent wife, dare you think of dragging another victim to the altar ? God of mercy ! thou in whose protection I ever confided, desert me not at this dreadful crisis. Oh ! save me from the gulf that yawns before me ; let thy bolt of retributive justice at length strike his guilty head."

Exasperated to fury by this invocation, Don Rodolph, with unmanly violence, now renewed his efforts to tear her from the pillar, and at length succeeded.

" Yet hear me, Rodolph, she then exclaimed with increasing vehemence. " Grant me the respite of a few short hours at least."

" What !" he replied, " after the avowal of such sentiments, can you expect any attention to your wishes from me ? No, no," he added, " you have too clearly demonstrated, by what you have said, the little likelihood there is, of any thing of the kind making any impression on you, to induce me to it."

Her shrieks now echoed through the building. Regardless, however, of them, he persevered in forcing her towards the door, but ere he had succeeded in dragging her from the chamber, the clang of steel was heard from within the inner one ; and instantly after, from beneath the tapestry that concealed the entrance to it, appeared a majestic figure cased in armour.

Rushing forward, with one hand he rescued the panting Elvina, while with the other he plunged his sword into the polluted heart of the unguarded Don Rodolph, and who, staggering backwards, with one deep and deadly groan, dropt lifeless at the feet of the horror-struck Jerome !—horror-struck, but not so

much by this dreadful catastrophe, as from believing, that in him to whom it was owing, he beheld the aven-
ging spirit of the murdered Osma, come like one of
the ministers of that unfathomable retribution, who
make their circuit in this lower world, and take ac-
count of all the deeds of darkness, to revenge his
wrongs.

Well indeed might he conceive a thought of this
nature, not only from his belief of the murder of the
duke, but the terrible expression of his countenance,
as revealed to view by his visor being up.

Restless, anxious, and impatient, after resuming his
armour, he, from time to time, advanced into the
passage communicating with his dungeon, to listen
for his daughter ; her piercing shrieks echoing to it,
drew him to her chamber ; and the just punishment
he had inflicted on the guilty son, would quickly have
been followed by a similar act of retribution, on the
still more atrocious father, but for the sudden seizure
of his arms by the caitiff Juan.

Quickly undeceiving the conscience stricken monk,
with an assurance that at another moment he would ac-
count for what now appeared extraordinary, he pro-
posed the removal of the duke to the dungeon whence
he had just escaped.

"To a dungeon which he shall not be able to burst
again," impiously returned the sanguinary Jerome,
"till the last day. This moment let him be immolated
to my vengeance : yet no," he suddenly added, as,
overpowered by numbers, the Duke vainly tried to
defend himself, "a summary punishment were a poor
revenge ; to satisfy me, I must have groan for groan,
and pang for pang : bind him, and let him be conveyed
to Seville, to meet the fate that there awaits him
as a traitor. Yes, Rodolph," he continued, kneeling
down beside the weltering and still palpitating body of
his son, "ill-starred and beloved Rodolph," raising

his stiffening hand to his lips as he spoke, “ ‘tis only when I behold his blood streaming from the scaffold, his head blackening in the changing seasons, I shall think thee avenged :—but what shall avenge thee? what atone for thy loss? thou whom I cherished with such tenderness; to whom I looked forward with such mingled pride and exultation: and shall he who robbed me of thee sink into his grave, with the sooth-ing idea of leaving a child to mourn him! no, by Heaven! childless as he has rendered me, so childless shall he die,” he cried, starting from the ground as he spoke, and with eyes glaring with horrible fury, approaching the almost frantic Elvina, as kneeling she clasped the knees of her disarmed father.

The unbending soul of Osma would not suffer him to supplicate; yet more than mortal agony he endured, when he beheld the ruffian hands of Jerome twisted in the dishevelled tresses of his daughter, and saw her, with brutal violence, dragged from him; a deep, a hollow groan burst from him, and “ Oh! execrable villain!” with an appealing look to Heaven, he exclaimed.

More he was not allowed to utter: he was forced from the room, pursued by the shrieks of his daughter for mercy. Juan remained behind, and struck with a vague idea of deriving some advantage from her beauty, threw himself between her and the uplifted dagger of Jerome—“ Nay,” cried he, holding his arm, “ do not imbrue your hand in her blood; leave her to me.”

“ To thee!” returned Jerome with fury, and trying to shake him off, “ to thee, who hast already betrayed the trust reposed in thee! Wretch, but for thee, I should not now have to lament a murdered son.”

“ The labourer is worthy of his hire,” retorted Juan; “ had you put me out of suspense at once about the reward, I should not have hesitated to commit the deed.”

"What! add insolence to treachery!" cried Jerome, with increasing rage, and now relinquishing his hold of Elvina, in order to turn his whole fury upon him.

Released from his grasp, Elvina, with a frantic shriek of mingled joy and terror, darted from the room; in the general confusion that prevailed throughout the building, she might, perhaps, she thought, be able to effect her escape.

She had remarked a door at the end of the gallery, and to that she now directed her steps, aware that to descend to the hall would be certain destruction; but ere she had gained it, her arm was seized behind, and at the same moment, the shriek which was bursting from her lips was prevented by the application of a hand to her mouth; turning a frenzied glance upon the person who had seized her, she beheld one of the ruffians of the execrable Jerome.

"Hold," cried he, "I am inclined to serve you."

"To serve me!" exclaimed the nearly sinking Elvina, with almost a shriek of joy, and holding up her trembling hands to him.

"Be cautious," cried he, "or your voice may betray us."

Then motioning her to follow him, he led the way to a private staircase, beyond the door to which she was advancing.

Here again pausing, "Now," said he, "if I undertake your deliverance, what reward can you give me?"

"All that I can now command," returned Elvina, taking from her neck a rich locket, and with her purse, putting it into his hand; "and should more not be in my power, my prayers shall be continually offered up to Heaven to recompense you for the deed."

"Well, I accept what you have now given me, as

a pledge of more, should you ever have the means, and will immediately conduct you hence; for though I am, or rather have been, in the pay of father Jerome, yet, when as great an advantage can be derived from a good as a bad action, I have always an inclination to the former, which, let me assure you, is more than every one can say; for there are people who are wicked for the sake of wickedness itself."

Then taking her hand, he softly conducted her down the stairs, and through several lonely chambers, till at length he brought her to a door, opening immediately beyond the building, and which hastily unbolting, they passed through.

What the feelings of Elvina were, at this moment, may easier be conceived than described—her high-wrought ecstacy at finding herself beyond those dreaded walls, whose gloomy and suspicious appearance in some degree prepared the shuddering mind for the scenes passing within them, and which, but a few minutes before, she imagined she never should have passed, at finding herself not only rescued from the horrors of impending death, but free to pursue the steps of her fettered father, to mitigate the sufferings he might be destined to sustain, to exert herself for him, to supplicate his friends, to animate their zeal in his cause, if necessary!

Overcome by her sensations, or rather in a transport of adoring gratitude, to that Being whose mighty arm had been outstretched for her deliverance, she fell prostrate a few steps from him, with her face to the ground.

Hastily raising her, "If you thus desert yourself," cried her companion, imputing to unsubdued terror her involuntary prostration, "my safety demands that I also should desert you."

This threat, in a moment had the desired effect—"Oh! fear not," she cried, reanimated by it, and

"eagerly grasping his arm, with a suppliant look,
fear not that I should not exert myself."

Again taking hold of her, he supported her steps across the rugged space intervening between the building and the woods, amidst which they immediately began to ascend; a small hamlet lay at some distance, to which their course was directed, for the purpose of procuring mules, and the escort necessary to safety in travelling this wild and dreary track. Day was by this time closed in, and the natural gloom of night was deepened by the dark umbrage of the woods. But neither the terrors of darkness, nor the difficulties of the way, which often led through brakes, where it was scarcely possible to force a passage, had any effect upon Elvina. The object she had in view, even more than the idea of the dangers she had escaped from, and which, by comparison, rendered those of the present moment insignificant, gave her courage to bear up against fatigue and apprehension.

At length they reached the spot where she was encouraged to hope she should, at least in some degree, be removed from both—nor was she disappointed: the hamlet, however, was by this time wrapt in repose, and several minutes elapsed ere her companion succeeded in raising the little inn.

While making the effort, Elvina rested her weary frame on a stone bench at the door, inhaling, not without something of a delicious sensation—a sensation principally excited by an involuntary review of the present and few last hours, the balmy fragrance of the unpruned and neglected jessamine, that partly falling from the wall above, hung round it, and gazing on the scattered objects, that gave her the sweet assurance of being again in a place where innocence and peace at least were to be met with.

A rippling current, sparkling in the beams of the

moon, that now, risen high in the firmament, spreading her silver emanations far around, ran near her, singing her pensive ear by its melancholy sound, ever and anon, the faint shuddering of the wood casioned a feeling of thrilling awe.

At length, the repeated knocks and hollows of companion were answered ; a lattice was opened a gruff voice demanded what was the matter.

The reply, accompanied by a previously conc story of their having been robbed by banditti, from whom with difficulty they had escaped, immediately obtained them what they required : the door was quickly opened, and while the mules were paring, and the guide getting ready, Elvina partook of some refreshment at it. Then mounting a mule, and still accompanied by her deliverer, she moved forward, regardless of fatigue, and with a faint hope that all might yet end well ; that the sorrow, the sorieties, the solicitudes of the present moment, would all yet be amply compensated, by the happy deliverance of her father.

CHAP. XIX.

anst thou do, O Colmal, for the fallen chief ? Her steps
al ; her hair is loose ; her eye looks wildly through her

OSSIAN.

remorseless Jerome did not again change his nation respecting the duke. He was conveyed to which a rumour of the deception he practised, owing to some inadvertent expressions Lorenzo, had preceded him ; and the motives h it was owing being fully developed, by of the father, who possessed papers explaining them, he was tried, found guilty of high treason, sentenced to death ; his titles attainted, and his possessions seized on by the king.

roud soul, disdainful of a falsehood, would have suffered him to deny the reality of the accusations adduced against him, even though there had been a possibility of corroborating them as fully as was.

either attempted to deny nor to excuse his restored Sir Lorenzo to Lisbon, for the express purpose of confirming the Portuguese in their plausible intentions respecting the deceased king's ; neither his having had in contemplation to f possible, a change in the present existing interest of Castile. All he attempted was, to

have his allegations against his betrayer listened to, and the justice he had been the means of bringing him to, in an equal degree inflicted on him.

But in vain he preferred his accusations against him ; they were wholly disregarded, in consequence of being imputed, unsupported as they were by any other testimony than his own, to that resentment it was natural to suppose he felt against him, as but for the papers he produced, his guilt would never have been substantiated.

They consisted of letters addressed to several of the most distinguished partizans of his illustrious house, explanatory of the motives that actuated him to proceed to Lisbon, and were committed to the care of father Jerome, for the purpose of being sent to them ; for being in his possession, the subtle monk accounted, by pretending he had received them from an unknown person, with a letter expressive of the deepest regret for ever having entered into the business they treated of ; and pointing out, as some atonement for having done so, the lonely house in which the duke had tarried behind Sir Lorenzo, for the purpose of receiving answers to them, and where he, the father, as in duty bound, had seized him.

Distracted at his fate, and compelled, besides, to leave the castle on its seizure, Olivia resolved on following Elvina ; but how impossible to express her consternation, when, on arriving at that of Lerida, she learned from its ancient housekeeper, that it had not been occupied for years, by any of the family, in consequence of the death of the marquis in England, and the subsequent marriage of his lady with a nobleman of that kingdom ; and that no stranger whatever had been to it for a considerable time. Overcome by grief and terror, she sunk beneath her feelings, and for a few days was compelled to accept the offer of accommodation in it.

By this time, Don Ferdinand had returned from Lisbon, but without any change in his feelings, any alleviation of the intolerable anguish with which he commenced his journey thither. Elvina still reigned triumphant in his heart ; still, still with fervent anguish and consuming rage, he dwelt on her imagined perfidy ; reproaches lent their idle aid in vain ; in vain he called upon his pride to aid him in his struggles to expel her from his thoughts ; fancy still pour'd afresh her beauties on them, rendering ineffectual every effort made for the purpose.

From the rumours which had met his ear at Lisbon, he was not surprised by the tidings he received, on his return to Seville, respecting the duke ; but though not surprised, he was afflicted beyond description.

Forgetting the cause he had of enmity to him, or rather incapable of feeling enmity towards a fallen foe, towards the dear father of her whom, spite of his imagined wrongs, of all the pangs she had made him suffer, he still adored, he instantly began to exert himself in his behalf. All the interest of his house he had exerted for him, backed by the humblest supplications in person—supplications which, for his own life, he would have disdained making ; but the king was inexorable.

At length, in despair, he betook himself to the palace of Guzman, in hopes the marchioness and her daughter would, at his request, exert their influence with the marquis, to prevail on him to second another application to the king, in whose estimation he stood high, for the unhappy Osma, and which he himself had in vain entreated of him.

The friendship they had always evinced for the lovely Elvina warranted these hopes ; but alas ! with all their boasting, they felt not the smallest esteem or affection for her ; on the contrary, her surpassing

beauty, and the consequently superior admiration it excited, had rendered her an object of such hatred and envy to them, as to induce their rejoicing at the destruction of her prospects—at the idea of the remainder of her life being passed in sorrow and obscurity, in the wretchedness of dependence on those whom she once unconsciously triumphed over, or else amid the gloom and severities of monastic seclusion.

Far, however, from betraying their real sentiments, they counterfeited the most exquisite sensibility for her, a sensibility which the noble-hearted Ferdinand, judging of others by himself did not once suspect ; but in the midst of their affected sorrow, their solemn assurances of exerting all their influence with the marquis, to induce him to comply with his wishes, and whom they pretended to have already importuned on the subject, the door of the apartment was abruptly thrown open, and ere the attendant had time to announce the person who was approaching, a fair spectre rushed in, and fell at the feet of the marchioness.

It can scarcely be necessary to say it was Elvina. Impatient to behold her Olivia again, and wishing to be accompanied to Seville by her, she had first proceeded to the castle, and there learnt the dreadful fate impending over her father.

The instant she recovered from the o'erwhelming effect it had upon her, she conceived the idea of flying to the marchioness of Guzman, of whose friendship for her she had not a doubt, like her unhappy lover, being too sincere herself to suspect the sincerity of others, nor consequently of receiving every assistance from her in this dreadful emergency.

Had the reverse been the case, madness must have seized her ; for the next day being the one appointed for the execution of her father, numerous as she

believed his friends to be, she knew there was no time to solicit them in his behalf.

Hypocrisy is generally at some time or other unmasked ; the marchioness completely thrown off her guard by this unexpected apparition, by the rage and vexation she felt at her being again thrown in the way of Ferdinand whose hand she had long aimed at for her daughter, and in whose chains she did not despair of yet seeing him, could he be induced to forget Elvina, which now that they had met again, seemed every thing but possible, was unable to command herself, unable any longer to dissemble her real feelings.

With a countenance very different from that which she had just the moment before worn, she demanded of the attendant how he came to allow of this intrusion on her ?

With a piercing cry, Elvina prevented his replying. "Oh, Heavens !" she frantically exclaimed, "is this the realization of the hope that brought me hither ? Do you," with all the wildness of despair, she added, "do you abandon me ? you, to whom I fled as my only hope, my only refuge in this hour of agony ? You proffered me kindness when I needed it not — oh ! disappoint not, in the season of adversity, the expectations you raised in the day of prosperity ; succourless and sad, I now implore some proof of that friendship which you so often professed for me."

"Whatever were the views that led you hither, I must now explicitly inform you," cried the marchioness, "that recent events will not permit a continuance of that friendship ; respect for themselves will not allow the wife or daughter of the marquis of Guzman to hold any further correspondence with the daughter of a traitor. I am sorry for your sufferings, but justice demands their infliction. I shall now leave you in the uninterrupted enjoyment of this apartment, as long as you choose to continue in it ;

nor have I any hesitation in adding, that though I can no longer receive you as a guest, I shall feel pleasure in extending my benevolence to you, should you need it."

Then drawing her robe from the trembling grasp of the heart-rent Elvina, and taking her daughter by the arm, she quitted the room, not without a sensation of malicious joy, that fully reconciled her to the idea of the odious light in which her conduct to the unhappy suppliant must occasion her, she was aware, to be regarded by him, at the thoughts of the mortification she had inflicted on Don Ferdinand, by the humiliating manner in which she had treated his mistress.

Elvina fell to the ground, as she disengaged herself from her, unable to bear up against this unexpected blow. The hopelessness of any further effort in behalf of her father, completely subdued her; since deceived here, on whose sincerity could she rely? "I cannot save thee, my father," she faintly exclaimed; "the world deserts us, but I can die with thee."

"And does the baseness, the ingratitude of one false friend, render Elvina forgetful of every real one?" now cried Don Ferdinand, advancing from the window against which he had been leaning at her entrance, and whom, in her eagerness to throw herself at the feet of the perfidious marchioness, she had not noticed.

Starting from the floor at the well-known accents, Elvina no sooner convinced herself that her ear had not deceived her, than with a shriek of joy and surprise, "Heaven listens to me," she cried, wildly clasping her hands together; "the supplications of my heart have been regarded; hope revives at seeing you here, for I know, I know your generous nature too well, to fear that the rude storm which now howls around me, will scare thee from me; yes, I

know thee too well to think—" involuntarily sinking at his feet as she proceeded, and with a pathos that subdued his very soul, that affected even to agony his feelings, "you will forsake me."

"Forsake thee!" in a voice scarce articulate, repeated the agitated, the agonized Ferdinand, dropping on one knee beside her, and tremblingly circling her waist with his arm ; "forsake thee!" he repeated ; then after a transient pause, occasioned by emotion, "Oh ! may Heaven," with energy he exclaimed, "forsake me when I forsake the suffering child of humanity, but above all, thee, the so long cherished object of my tenderest regard ; thee, so doubly dear, so doubly interesting from thy sorrows!"

"You will instantly, then, make an effort for my father?" cried Elvina.

"Alas!" replied he, involuntarily, "I have already exerted myself in his behalf, but—"

A fearful shriek prevented what he would have added : "I am come, then," cried Elvina, convulsively, "but to attend him to the scaffold."

"Oh, God ! that I could give you hope, returned the distracted Ferdinand—then suddenly starting, "Yet do not utterly despair," he cried, "it has just struck me, that were you to supplicate the king yourself for him, the revocation of his sentence might be obtained—might, do I say!" yielding, in spite of himself, to the ardour of his feelings—"Oh ! it would, it must—he could not gaze," contemplating her himself as he spoke, with eyes expressive, eloquently expressive of the extatic tenderness, the fervent love, the fond devotion she had inspired him with, "and be unmoved ; he could not listen, and be inexorable."

"Let us fly then," said Elvina, starting from the ground, and seizing his arm.

"Nay, a minute," he returned, and summoning a messenger, he despatched him to his palace for a carriage, aware of the notice which her exquisite beauty, together with the disorder of her looks and dress, would occasion her to attract, were she to proceed through the streets on foot.

In their way to the palace her languid head dropt for a minute unconsciously on his shoulder. Oh, what were the sensations of Don Ferdinand at this moment! Oh, what his sensations at finding the dear object of his tenderest affections thus thrown upon his pity, his companion, his support, without his having the consolation to think he might remain her protector! Her supposed attachment to the hated Rodolph interdicted such a thought, checked the warm vow that was ready to burst from his lips, to devote his life to her service, to the soothing her sorrows, to the alleviation of her anguish, should her suit to the king prove unsuccessful. But though the idea of her passion for another obtruded at the moment to chill the warm feelings of the lover, it could not chill those of the friend of humanity, of sensibility; and with the tear which dewed his manly cheek at her sufferings, as, melting in fondness o'er her, he supported her trembling frame, was mingled one of bitterness and despair on his own account.

On reaching the palace he sent for Don Julio, who was luckily in attendance this day on the king, and briefly informing him of the business on which they were come, he offered to conduct them up a back staircase to a private gallery which the king had to pass through to his private apartments, from the closet where he gave audiences, and which he was now on the point of quitting. His offer was gratefully accepted, and Don Ferdinand was pleased to find, on reaching the gallery, no one in it. Scarcely had they entered it ere the king made his appear-

ance ; intent on looking over a paper, he perceived not who were awaiting him, till he had advanced some way in it. Immediately drawing back, with a look of resentment, for in an instant he surmised the motive that had brought Elvina there, he attempted to retreat to the apartment he had just quitted, but was prevented by Elvina throwing herself, with a faint shriek, between him and it.

Much disconcerted, "Don Julio," cried he, in a tone of sternness, "I am much displeased at your permitting this intrusion ; neither can I excuse you, Don Ferdinand, for thinking of it."

"Sire," said the noble youth, stepping forward, "deeply should I grieve did I think I had incurred your serious resentment, but from the nobleness of your nature I cannot despair of being forgiven for my present conduct, when the motive of it is taken into consideration."

"Be not too certain that you do not deceive yourself," returned the king. "Having already heard my determination on the subject on which you are come, 'twas presumptuous to encourage in any one a hope of its being changed."

"Oh sire, let him not be blamed," cried Elvina, falling at his feet, "for hearkening to the voice of misery, for yielding to the suggestions of the despair which led me hither, to thee who alone hast the power of rescuing me from wretchedness. I ask not the revocation of that part of the sentence which attains the honours of my house, which despoils it of its possessions, and lays it in the dust ; I ask but the revocation of that part which dooms my father to the scaffold. Oh ! spare him, sire ; spare him to my prayers ; spare him to my tears ; let those tears speak for me ; let the anguish they evince incline you to hear me ; let the consideration, that if justice awes, so mercy melts, have some influence in moving you

to compassion. If he who offered himself as a propitiation for our sins, had not been sensible how liable we all are to err, from the unhappy imperfections of our nature, he never would have enjoined us to mercy as he has done, since there would then have been no room for the display of it. Think, sire, think, that by the utterance of one word, you have the power of raising a trembling wretch from misery to happiness, from earth to heaven; and suffer the benevolence of your nature to induce you to pronounce it."

"Lady," he replied, disengaging, as he spoke, his cloak which unconsciously, perhaps, she had held by while addressing him, "your friends would have acted with greater kindness towards you, had they spared you the pain of hearing me refuse this application. I am moved by your sufferings, but compassion for an individual cannot make me forgetful of the duty I owe myself and descendants; were it to do so, it would then deserve the name of weakness. I am affected, I repeat, by your sorrows; I grieve to think that one so good and amiable should be involved in misery by the guilt of another, but cannot, will not revoke the sentence passed upon the duke; justice must have its victim, nor will I suffer his name again to be uttered in my presence."

Elvina fell prostrate on the floor, as he drew back from her. Ferdinand, the cruelly, the dreadfully disappointed Ferdinand, snatched her from it. For a minute she lay with eyes closed, utterly exhausted, in his arms; then wildly starting, and perceiving the king on the point of closing the door of his apartment, she darted after him, and again throwing herself on her knees, while he yet held it in his hand— "Oh! ere this fatal door, like the gates of death, be forever closed upon my hopes, listen to the voice of my despair," she cried, "I am not ignorant, sire,

of the imperious duties of a sovereign ; I know they are often, contrary to every feeling, compelled to sacrifice humanity to justice ; but for once, let the former prevail. After my father being given up, as I may say, from the very grave, to my wishes, oh ! in agony I supplicate not to lose him by a death of violence ; if you doubt his fealty again, let walls of rock, and bars of adamant, secure us—only spare him to me ; only spare me the horror of beholding his blood streaming on the scaffold."

" Why, why am I thus overborne by supplication ? " cried the king, somewhat impatiently, yet in a tone evidently indicative of struggling feelings. " Yet, since I waver, I will decide on the side of mercy :—lady, your tears, your prayers, above all, your virtues, have subdued me ; I give your father to you ; and to evince my esteem, my admiration of those virtues, to encourage goodness, by demonstrating, that even in this world it will meet with an adequate reward, I restore him to you, not like a star shorn of all its beams, but with all his honours, all his estates.

Elvina essayed to speak, but transport overpowered her utterance ; she bowed her face to the earth, unable in any other way to express what she felt.

The king motioned to the friends to raise her, and the impassioned lover again caught her from the floor—several minutes however elapsed ere she showed any sign almost of animation ; at length, those radiant eyes, which sorrow had so long dimmed, were again unclosed.

" Be you yourself the messenger of peace and mercy," cried the king, on seeing her recover : " were they to be personified, yours surely is the form that would be chosen for the purpose ; yet there is one condition on which I must insist, ere I confirm my promise."

" A condition !" shudderingly repeated Elvina, the

life-blood that was beginning to mantle through her cheek again forsaking it.

"Yes," replied the king, but with a benignant smile, that in a moment dissipated her apprehensions, "it is, that the duke no longer opposes your union with a lover so worthy of you."

Elvina for a moment hid her face, suffused with blushes, in her hand; then again looking up, not sorry, perhaps, at this opportunity of assuring her Ferdinand of the happiness she naturally concluded the acknowledgment would give him—"Sire," she replied, in tremulous accents, "'tis a condition already complied with; my father's declaration in our last conference, permits me to aver so."

Don Ferdinand, ignorant of the death of Rodolph, started at this assertion; checking, however, the emotion it inspired, checking it, from the sudden recollection of the insurmountable obstacles which the conduct he was led to accuse her of, had raised to their union, he proceeded to re-conduct her to the carriage.

CHAP. XX.

To-morrow shall the traveller come ; he that saw me in my beauty shall come ; his eyes will search the field, but they will not find me ; the hunter shall come forth in the morning, and the voice of my harp shall not be heard. Where is the son of ear-borne Fingal ; the tear will be on his cheek.

OSSIAN.

IN the mean while, the duke, beheld the hour of his death rapidly approaching, without any visible emotion ; the indifference with which he viewed it, was such as might be expected from his character : but though he could contemplate its terrors without dismay, he could not reflect on his destruction being occasioned by himself ; his fall from the proud eminence on which auspicious fortune had placed him, the triumph afforded to his enemies, the stigma affixed to his name, above all, the dreadful, the untimely fate of his lovely child (for of her murder by the execrable Jerome, he had not the smallest doubt) without pangs that dewed his forehead with the cold moisture of agony.

A thousand times, in the dead of the night, did he start from his restless couch, under the idea of her fair and mangled form fleeting past it ; and in the agonised feelings excited by her supposed death, called upon Heaven to accelerate the fate impending over him.

That he would hasten it, if possessed of the power, as an apprehension so strongly entertained, as to occasion his being deprived of all means of self-destruction, and interdicted from all intercourse with his friends.

But this, and even more, he could at times have borne with something of internal composure, but for the thoughts of his betrayer triumphing unmolested over his crimes; when he reflected on this, scarcely could he forbear from openly arraigning the justice of heaven, scarcely from committing all the extravagancies of madness.

Preceded by the order of the king, Elvina was instantly admitted to the prison. It was deemed advisable, however, for the sake of both, that the tidings he brought should be communicated to him by another person; and accordingly, the monk who in general attended on the unhappy inmates of the place, as deputed to break them to him.

He found him in a reclining attitude, and apparently lost in thought, near the dim lattice, fringed with yew round, that lighted the apartment, and through which, the sun, that glorious orb, which he believed would rise no more to him, now threw a languid radiance upon the dismal walls.

The monk had wished to approach him before, but as told, whenever his presence was wished for, he could be summoned; and the duke, starting from his seat as he entered, gave him to understand, by a frowny frown, that he deemed his undesired visit an intrusion.

"My son," cried the venerable man, perfectly comprehending the nature of this glance, but without a louring look in return, for Nature had done with resentments in him, the years that had snowed his temples, and inclined his form, had not passed over him without subduing every irritable feeling,

" although my duty and my wish to visit the cell of sorrow and of suffering, I would not, undesired, have made my appearance here, but that I have a motive for my intrusion, which will, I believe, render it excusable : I come, the messenger of happy tidings to you ; Heaven has interposed in your behalf ; the king, subdued by the solicitations of a friend, has been graciously pleased to remit the sentence passed on you."

" A friend!" repeated the duke, as if in amaze ; " and who is the friend?" with something of a smile of bitterness, " to whom am I indebted ?"

" To a person who braved dangers, difficulties, and fatigue, to obtain the power of serving you ; but who, in doing all this, or more, if necessary, or almost probable, would still have been performing but her duty—to—" he paused for a moment, overcome by the fullness of his own heart ; then again, but in a voice interrupted by emotion—" to your daughter," he cried, " you owe the pardon of the king ; to a daughter, whose virtues give you more cause for pride and exultation, than all the honours of your ancestry, than all the victories achieved by your sword."

" Oh God! can it be !" exclaimed the Duke, with the wildest emotion.

" Let this fervent embrace convince you of the truth of his assertion," cried Elvina, rushing forward from the door, where for the last minute she had been standing, as she spoke, and falling on his neck— " Oh ! my father, this, this is a recompense for all we have suffered."

She sunk beneath the high-wrought feelings of the moment ; and, as if content to resign her pure spirit into the hands of her Creator, the minute she had effected the deliverance of her parent, remained for such a considerable period in a state of insensibility, that doubts were beginning to be entertained of her recovery, when at length, a faint tinge of returning anima-

tion was perceived in her cheek, and shortly after she regained her faculties.

"Oh! my Elvina," cried the duke, as she revived to a consciousness of his tenderness, subdued at the moment to a softness, a sensibility he had never before evinced, "lengthened life is acceptable, since owing to you; death would have been a blessing, had I indeed lost thee."

Something yet remained to be done ere he quitted the cell; his hands were still manacled; for every aggravation his situation would admit of, the proud, the haughty Osma had been made to endure, in this hour of trial, and a person was obliged to be summoned to unloose them; as the chains dropt from him, Elvina involuntarily sunk on her knees, and with a sensation of the most exquisite nature, kissed his wrists.

"Oh! what a subject for the pencil!" exclaimed the venerable monk: "like thine, like thine," he cried, as in the act of blessing her, his hand rested for a moment on her beauteous head, "be ever the triumphs of virtue! how poor, how cold, how insignificant the feelings of gratified vanity or ambition, to the thrilling transports of a daughter congratulating herself on being the preserver of her parent's life!"

A carriage was already prepared for the duke, and they were on the point of descending to it, when Elvina received a message from Don Ferdinand, whom she had left in another apartment, requesting to see her for a moment: the duke started at his name; then a little recovering from the emotion it had excited, desired Elvina to inform him, that at a more collected moment, he should be happy to see him, and requite the obligations he owed him.

Elvina doubted not, his desiring to see her was for the purpose of requesting to be immediately admitted to the presence of the duke; instead of this, however, *being the case*, he informed her, with quite an altered

mien, the cold and chilling air of studied formality, that it was solely for the purpose of offering her his congratulations on the happy issue of her afflictions, and taking his leave ere his departure.

Confounded by his manner, Elvina stood mute and motionless for a moment, till the recurrence of the unhappy mistake, into which he had been betrayed concerning her, to recollection, by enabling her in some way to account for it, overcame, in a degree, the shock it had given her ; and delivering the message of the duke to him, she bade him farewell, with something of composure, at the idea of having it fully in her power to explain the circumstances that had led to this mistake.

In consequence of the immediate orders of the king, the castle was resigned to their domestics ere they reached its ancient gates, and who received them with demonstrations of joy, that heightened not a little the feelings of the moment.

But how impossible to paint the rage, the consternation, and amazement of the abbot, on hearing of the pardon of the duke ! a rage, a consternation and amazement, increased by the reflection, that he had had it in his power to have prevented the interposition of his daughter for him, and by his having been led to believe, through the false report of one of his creatures, made for the purpose of avoiding a troublesome pursuit after her, that in attempting to escape through the woods, she had fallen from a precipice, and been dashed to pieces. The bitterness of disappointed revenge was heightened by the ruin in which it involved him ; the restoration of the duke to liberty was, he was well aware, the signal of his destruction ; he shuddered at the idea of the terrible retribution which the vengeance of a foe, at once so powerful and vindictive, would inflict ; and perceiving no way of averting, no way of avoiding the dreadful, the o'erwhelming-

ing storm that was rolling towards him, in a paroxysm of madness and despair, he swallowed poison.

But though certain, immediate death was not in the draught, as he had imagined ; and during the lingering agonies it occasioned, agonies too excruciating to permit the concealment of the cause to which they were owing, his soul suddenly became awakened to a sense of the enormities he had committed. Trembling at the dreadful retrospect, he dismissed all but Father Anselm, and to him made an ample confession of all, as the only atonement now in his power to make for them, and in order to prevent any disagreeable consequences to the duke, should the fate of his son ever be inquired into ; but except this were the case, he left it in charge to the father, to fervently and solemnly conjure the duke, by the generosity and charity he possessed, not to expose his memory to the obloquy that must rest on it forever, should his crimes be known, but satisfied with the merited vengeance he had inflicted on him, to let him rest undisturbed in the early and unconsecrated grave to which he had hurried him.

This request, together with all that passed in his last moments, was made known to the duke, in the first interview the father had with him after his return to the castle, and the silence it implored relative to the guilty Rodolph, he promised, not, however, from any noble forgiveness of the dead—he held the memory of Rodolph in utter execration, but solely because he knew he could not subject it to the opprobrium it merited, without endangering the discovery of transactions, which it was essential to his own honour and reputation to have for ever concealed.

A more generous motive influenced the fair and feeling Elvina to it; she could not hear of the sufferings and compunction of the wretched father, without being moved to pity and forgiveness ; and indu-

ced by the consideration of the feelings that had prompted his dying request, to determine on inviolable silence respecting every circumstance that could blacken the memory of his son.

Of course, all idea of disclosing to Don Ferdinand the fate of the unhappy Dorinda was relinquished ; in her meditated explanation with him, she decided on merely informing him, that the interview she had granted Don Rodolph in the pavilion, and the discovery of which had excited in his bosom such unjust suspicions of her, was at the particular request of a friend, now deceased, whose name she had powerful reasons for concealing, and who had a certain and important explanation to demand of him, which she had no means of obtaining but through her medium.

The crime by which he had closed his career was too fully ascertained, to permit the abbot to be laid within the hallowed precincts of the convent : at the midnight hour he was conveyed to an obscure spot in the forest, and there, the victim of his own enormities, consigned to the oblivion of the grave, unknelled, unmourned, for they should have profaned

“ The service of the dead,
To have sung a requiem, and such rest to him,
As to peace-parted souls.”

Father Anselm was the person appointed to succeed him by the duke, to the great joy of the rest of the community ; his exemplary piety, and the mild benevolence of his manners, having recommended him to the esteem and affection of all : and now Elvina gave it in charge to him, to have proper persons despatched to the now truly desolate castle of the deceased Abbot, both Juan and Ursula having fallen victims to his fury, for the purpose of removing the

remains of the unfortunate Dorinda to consecrated ground. She also despatched a messenger after her dear Olivia, of whose journey to the castle of Lerida she was informed by the domestics, to acquaint her with the happy termination of recent sorrows, and hasten her return.

A discovery now took place, which removed the fearful impression made on her, by the mysterious circumstances that had led her to discover Olivia in the subterraneous chapel : One of the monks requested a private audience of her, the day after her return to the castle ; and no sooner had he entered the apartment, than she was convinced he was the person who had occasioned that discovery ; nor was she mistaken—he came for the purpose of avowing the fact. Afraid of coming forward, lest of involving himself with the deceased abbot, in whose power he completely was, to reveal to her the deception practised on her, as it then seemed, and which a conversation, accidentally overheard between him and Olivia, had disclosed to him, yet deeming it absolutely essential to her welfare and happiness to be informed of it, he at length resolved on availing himself of his astonishing likeness to the portrait of her grandsire as noticed both by himself and other of the brothers, in their walks through the extensive galleries of the castle, to which, whenever they pleased, they had access, to appear to her as a supernatural visitant, in hopes, in this character, of being able to excite her to the discovery he wished. He concluded by imploring her eternal silence on the subject, aware of the disclosure he had made to her being just as calculated to implicate him with the haughty duke, as it would have been with the vindictive abbot.

Elvina not only gave him the promise he required, *but, in her turn, conjured him to adhere to inviola-*

ble secrecy himself concerning it, more than the life of her father, his fame and reputation, depending on the transactions he had mentioned being forever shrouded in oblivion.

And now it seemed as if nothing was wanting to the complete restoration of Elvina's tranquillity and happiness, but an explanation between her and Don Ferdinand, satisfied as the retrospect of her conduct had reason to make her with respect to herself; but he came not to receive, he came not to demand this explanation; and in grief, surprise, and apprehension, at the obstinacy of his suspicions, for to the unworthy, the unjust opinion he had been led to conceive of her, she entirely imputed not seeing him, her mind again became a prey to the most tormenting disquietude.

Three days had now passed away since her return to the castle, but without bringing even a message of inquiry from him; and all hope of a reconciliation taking place between them began to be relinquished, since neither pride nor delicacy would permit her to think, for a moment, of obtruding on him an explanation which he had the power of soliciting in person.

Unable to subdue her anguish, the anguish imparted by the relinquishment of this hope, she began, as much as possible, to avoid the penetrating eyes of the duke, lest the discovery of it should revive those irritable and vindictive feelings, those ancient and unjust prejudices, she had so bitterly deplored his entertaining.

Lost in agonizing recollections one evening—recollections which dewed her lovely cheek with tears, she heard not his approach to the apartment where she was sitting, till he was within a few paces of it, when starting from her seat, she darted from it, through a door opening to the lawn; nor paused,

fearful he might have caught a glance of her quitting it, and have followed her, till she found herself within the covert of the dark shades that margined it, but in which she had not advanced many yards, ere, with a degree of surprise, that drew a faint scream from her, she started back at the unexpected sight of Don Ferdinand, leaning, in a desponding attitude, against a tree, whence, through an opening in the shades, there was a partial view of the old towers of the castle, now crimsoned with the rays of the setting sun.

"You here!" she involuntarily exclaimed, with a look, and in tones indicative of the emotion she felt at the circumstance.

"For being so," replied he, advancing towards her, but evidently in equal emotion, agitated, embarrassed, faltering in his accents, and with his countenance suffused with the glow of confusion—a glow that gave to it new charms, "I am aware an apology is necessary; but trust me, I shall steadily resist in future, the feelings that might again lead me to intrude on your privacy."

"You were not, then," said the still more agitated Elvina, scarcely able to support herself as she spoke, "you were not, then, coming to the castle?"

"To the castle!" repeated he passionately. "Oh, Heavens! what but folly, what but madness, what but a wish to augment my wretchedness, already too intolerable for calm endurance, could tempt me to enter its walls again! No, no, Elvina, you—" he paused, at once shocked and surprised by the tears which now gushed in torrents from her.

"You alarm, you distress me," he resumed, after the silence of a minute, "by these tears. I would entreat, I would implore to be informed of the cause of them, implore to be relieved from the torturing

anxiety they excite, but that I dread being accused of temerity."

"To convince you of the fear being unfounded, know, then," she returned, but in a voice scarcely articulate, "you, yes, Ferdinand, you yourself are the cause of them; those cruel, those unjust, those injurious suspicions, to which you have yielded respecting me—'tis to them, 'tis to the wrong you have done me, by ever giving admission to them, these tears are owing: they it is, that again wring my heart with agony, ere yet recovered from the sufferings it recently underwent."

"The wrong I have done you!" exclaimed Ferdinand, in the wild accents of emotion. "Oh! repeat the assertion, confirm it, convince me I have indeed wronged you, and lasting as my life shall be my penitence for having done so."

"Listen, then," said Elvina—she then, as briefly as possible, accounted for the circumstance to which alone she imputed the cruel letter he had sent her, but without once forgetting the silence she had resolved on, relative to every transaction calculated to involve the character of the departed Rodolph. Ere she had concluded, Ferdinand fell, in a transport of mingled joy and remorse at her feet; the seraphic expression of her countenance, her appealing looks to heaven, her unhesitating manner, the pathos of her mild collected tones, as she proceeded, all tended to convince him, ere she had finished her vindication, that in ever rendering it necessary he had wronged her.

"But you will, you will forgive me, angel of meekness and of mercy as you are," he cried, in accents at once impassioned and imploring, "when you know all, when you hear the cruel machinations that were used to disunite us. As succinctly as agitation would permit, he then explained to her the nature of those

machinations, and as she listened to him, she could not wonder at the consequences that had ensued from them ; neither was she at any loss to surmise by whom they had been devised ; she knew of none but the deceased abbot and his son, capable of planning such a scheme, or at all interested in preventing her union with Don Ferdinand. It was evident, that the intention she had avowed of seeing Rodolph, for the purpose of expostulating with him on his conduct to Dorinda, and of which they were doubtless apprized, by the secret means they possessed, of obtaining an immeditate knowledge of whatever was going forward in the castle, had first suggested it to them, and shuddered to think, that at the very moment she was listening to Rodolph's disavowal of the facts alleged against him by Dorinda, the unfortunate Dorinda herself was struggling in the hands of the ruffians deputed to bear her from her chamber, whence, as she now recollects, the wily abbot had contrived a pretext for drawing Olivia ; but they were now gone, and their death had sufficiently expiated their offences against her, in her sight, to prevent her giving utterance to the feelings excited by this still further proof of their baseness.

But had her charity been even less, she would still, probably, have observed the same silence respecting them, from the consideration, that she could scarcely betray them to obloquy, without risking the fame of her father, so immediately connected did a more minute and dispassionate review of it, than in the first instance she had been able to take, convince her many parts of his conduct had been with theirs.

Accordingly, on Ferdinand's pressing to know whether she had a suspicion of the person from whom the cruel, the execrable accusation against her had proceeded, she returned an evasive answer, adding, *with a seraph smile*, " Let it suffice to know 'tis

false ; to ascertain the author, could answer no other end, than to keep alive those irritable feelings which, while indulged, keep both real happiness and composure at a distance."

A fear of her ascribing his persevering in the inquiry to a still lingering doubt, withheld Don Ferdinand from repeating the question ; and in the transports of his joy at their reconciliation, he gradually lost those vindictive feelings which had occasioned it.

Equal to his adoration of her, was the remorse he felt at ever having given way to an injurious idea concerning her ; and in proportion to the misery these ideas had occasioned, was the happiness now experienced by their removal. *

Eloquently as he painted his recent sufferings to his tender, his sympathizing mistress, he was unequal to do them justice—to give her an adequate idea of what he felt, at finding, by a strange perverseness in his fate, that her hand might be his, at the very moment when worlds could not have induced him to accept it.

No, to a mind ardent, tender, delicate, enthusiastic in its feelings like his, the possession of the object of its affections was not sufficient for his happiness, without the conviction of her heart, as well as person, being his ; of her having not only accompanied him to the altar with reciprocal sentiments, but also experienced them, from the moment she excited a belief of having done so.

Led, therefore, to believe that Elvina had never felt for him those sentiments which she had professed, he shrunk from the idea of uniting their fates, notwithstanding the unabated ardour of his passion, notwithstanding his persuasion of its being unconquerable : to relinquish her was misery, yet to wed her, under the impression of her indifference and insincerity,

rity, would, he was well aware, from his knowledge of his own disposition, be superior wretchedness ; for well, well could he conceive what his maddening sensations must be, " who doats, yet doubts—suspects, yet strongly loves."

Besides, there was something in the way in which the supposed correspondence between her and Randolph had been carried on, so inconsistent with, so revolting to his ideas of female delicacy and propriety, as, exclusive of every other consideration, to oppose the renewal of his addresses to her. It was not sufficient that his wife should appear perfect in the eyes of the world ; to satisfy the delicacy of his feelings, the pride of his soul, it was requisite that he himself should know her to be so.

So fearful, however, was he of exposing her to the slightest animadversion, such was the tenderness, the exalted generosity of his nature, that the day following the deliverance of her father, he waited upon the king, for the express purpose of making him believe his declining the proposed alliance between them, was entirely owing to his conviction of its being one that did not meet the approbation of the duke, nor consequently be productive of real happiness to him ; and so thoroughly succeeded in impressing this belief on the mind of his majesty, as to induce him to relinquish all idea of interfering further on the subject.

But though his mind was fully made up to the relinquishment of Elvina, yet tortured, tantalized, at beholding within his reach that object which he had so long sighed to possess, but which he durst not now suffer himself to think of, his restlessness, his agitation, were as great as if still undecided in his resolution ; and under the influence of these feelings, he proceeded almost unconsciously towards the castle, till within a short distance of it, when giving his horse to his attendant, he repaired to a spot whence

he could again indulge himself with a view of its antique towers ; for notwithstanding his imagined injuries from her, he could not help experiencing something like a sensation of delight, at even gazing at the walls that enclosed her : what immediately followed, has been already related ; but alas ! the happiness that ensued was but of short duration ; ere they had well hailed its return, they saw the interposing hand of fate again stretched out between them.

Don Ferdinand no sooner heard of the fate impending over the duke, after his return from Lisbon, than he hastened to Elvina, for the purpose of assuring her, that she might rely on his using every exertion that could be made to save him ; but to his disappointment, instead of finding her there, or learning where she was to be met with, was informed by one of the domestics, who was suffered to remain after its seizure by the king, that she had left it some days previous to this period, on a secret journey ; and it now suddenly occurred to him to inquire where she had been.

Elvina, who had not the slightest suspicion of his having obtained any knowledge of her journey, was thrown into unutterable confusion by this question, since, without betraying what was infinitely more precious to her than existence, infinitely more sacred in her eyes, the honour of her father, she could not answer it ; yet in an instant surmised, from what had just passed, the probable consequences of remaining silent to it.

" A stranger to dissimulation, she was unable to conceal her dismay and confusion ; and as he witnessed her agitation, her alarmed lover relapsed into all the horrors of mistrust and jealousy.

All that he had ever heard of the deceit, of the perfidy of her sex, recurred at the moment to his recollection, inducing a belief of the possibility of her having de-

ceived him ; of her acceptance of his addresses being entirely owing to the real object of her affections being lost to her ; for of the death of Don Rodolph he was by this time apprized ; or rather to a hope, that by giving him her hand so immediately after his decease, she should prevent her secret attachment from being implicitly believed, if indeed it was suspected.

In vain Heaven seemed to beam in her eye, in vain truth, love and candour, to shine in every feature ; suspicion resuming its baneful influence over him, turned all beauty into thoughts of harm ; nor would the magic of her tones, had she been able to exert her voice at the moment, have proved more successful in reviving his confidence, and assuaging his anguish ; nought could suffice for this purpose, but a full, an unhesitating explanation respecting this fatal journey.

Suddenly grasping her hand, as with eyes bending to the ground she sought to avoid those glances which he seemed to shoot into her very soul. "Elvina," he exclaimed, in accents of half repressed vehemence, "you have not yet answered me, yet informed me where you were at the time I sought you at the castle."

"It cannot surely be of importance to you to know," returned Elvina, but in accents scarce articulate, and with a cheek alternately pale, alternately crimsoned by emotion.

"Not of importance to me to know!" he repeated wildly ; "Oh ! Heavens, how do my feelings contradict that assertion ! Elvina, 'tis essential to my peace, to my happiness, to the preservation of my reason, that you should inform me. Oh ! answer but this one interrogation more," he cried, throwing himself at her feet, "deign, deign to satisfy me in this instance, and you elevate me again from earth to heaven ; you claim, and you ensure to yourself the homage and submission of my future days."

— “Let us part, Don Ferdinand,” said the cruelly persecuted Elvina, but in a still fainter tone ; “the feelings betrayed by this wild emotion, impress me with a conviction of the necessity of our doing so forever. Without mutual confidence, there cannot be even a chance of happiness ; and to hope for that, where the mind is tainted by suspicion, fevered with jealousy, were ridiculous.”

“ You refuse, then, to answer me,” rejoined Don Ferdinand, starting from the ground, with all the wildness of alarm and despair, and distractedly striking his forehead, “ you force, you compel me to believe, by your obstinate silence, that there is something which you cannot, which you durst not reveal. Elvina, in pity, in mercy, in compassion to yourself as well as me, if indeed your heart acknowledges a sentiment of tenderness for me, divest my mind of the horrible idea, by satisfying my solicitude, as to the object of your recent journey ; trust to my honour, trust to my tenderness, to conceal forever any confidence you may repose in me.”

The resentment and indignation which she had experienced, at the renewal of his suspicions, vanquished by the tenderness of this supplication, the tortured Elvina would unhesitatingly have reposed in him the confidence he solicited, had she alone been the person to suffer by the communication he required ; yes, trusting to that honour, to that love of which he had just spoken, and of which she had already had too many affecting proofs, now to be able to doubt the generosity of either, for their concealment, she would instantly have committed every secret of her soul to his keeping, but that she could not repose this unlimited confidence in him, without irreparable injury to the reputation of her father, without betraying the base designs, the degrading artifices, the humiliating measures, his unjust hatred towards his house had led

him to conceive and have recourse to ; without proving, that however lofty, however exalted his pretensions to fame, they were unsupported by his actions ; and rather than accuse herself of this, rather than thus degrade him—him whose reputation the laws of nature enjoined her holding sacred, expose him to the silent scorn, the lasting contempt of the noble Ferdinand, deprive him of the esteem of that noble heart, which, above all others, she was ambitious of his possessing, she preferred the resignation of every hope.

Accordingly shrinking back on the agitated Ferdinand, repeating, after a short but impressive pause, and in a still more appealing, more energetic manner than before, his request, she falteringly desired him to leave her.

" You banish me then from you !" he cried, with a cheek now like her own, varying every moment through emotion, and eyes wildly rolling : " Oh ! Elvina, I repeat, if any tenderness for me warms your heart, ere it be too late, give me the satisfaction I require. I have a right to solicit, I have a right to demand it," he added, still more passionately ; " yes, the man whose vows you condescend to accept, has a right to expect, to demand your boundless confidence."

" Oh God !" exclaimed the unhappy Elvina, clasping her hands together, and casting her eyes despairingly towards heaven, " why, why am I thus tortured ? "

" Then you cannot, then you will not relieve me from these horrid doubts ? " again demanded the almost frantic Ferdinand.

Elvina involuntarily averted her face.

" I understand you," he cried, with for a moment the calmness of outbreathed despair ; then again lapsing into all the wild extravagance of passion, " *Elvina !*" he exclaimed, starting from her feet, at

which he had again, in the agony and vehemence of supplication, thrown himself, "Elvina! farewell; for ever, ever, farewell."

Then swift as an arrow from a bow, he darted from her sight. For a minute after he had left her, the sad, the lovely mourner, the self-devoted victim of unjust prejudice, stood mute and motionless; then, hurried onward by her feelings, by the despair, the wild anguish of her heart, she rushed after him, with a faint shriek for his return, but a shriek which did not reach his ear. Ere she had advanced many paces, however, recollecting herself, and suddenly checking her steps, with a bursting sigh, "But why should I seek to recall him?" she cried; "what end could it answer, but to renew the cruel conflicts I have just gone through, or endanger that secret on which depends, what more than existence I should value, the reputation of my father? Oh! Thou," she added, sinking on her knees upon the grass, within the covert of the rustling trees, while the hands that were uplifted in supplication trembled in agony, "Thou whose support I experienced through so many trying scenes, uphold me in this one trial more, this arduous conflict between love and duty, that free from remorse, as innocent of crime, I may sink into the early grave which sorrow leads me to. Ferdinand, beloved Ferdinand, I see we are for ever separated, but I reproach you not for the suspicions which occasion our being so; no, with such a foundation for them, as the cruel machinations of my enemies laid, I cannot wonder at their revival; but how unmerited they were, in that happier world where the secrets of all hearts are known, thou wilt be convinced, thou there wilt then see, that Elvina loved thee with a passion not less fervent, not less generous than thy own; that she whom you cast from your regard, would, at the very moment you threw her from it, have encountered the greatest difficulties, the greatest dangers for your

sake, would have shared with you, not merely without repining, but with rapture, the dampest, dreariest dungeon into which the vicissitudes of fortune could have plunged you."

She rose and turned—turned to be enfolded in the arms of her father.

He had caught a glimpse of her hurrying from the apartment, and in surprise and alarm at the circumstance, had followed, and been an unperceived, an unsuspected witness of the scene between her and Don Ferdinand.

The storm that had collected in his horizon had bent, but, not softened him, as it rolled over his head; with the retrieval of his fortunes revived all his native sternness, his unbending haughtiness, his ancient animosities; but this scene subdued him; it effected what affliction had failed of accomplishing, the subjugation of this sternness, an entire revolution in his feelings.

He could not behold that daughter to whom he owed so much, that daughter, who through his means had already been so severely tried, so deeply afflicted, voluntarily devoting herself to wretchedness, to avert from him the shame, the censure due to his offences; he could not hear that tender, that suppliant voice, whose pathetic pleading had turned the uplifted arm of justice from him, now calling upon Heaven for support beneath the agony inflicted by the relinquishment of the hopes she gave up for his sake, without being moved, without being melted, without determining to prevent the intended sacrifice; yet such, such were his emotions at the moment, he had not power to arrest the flying steps of the unhappy Ferdinand; but as his daughter turned, his arms involuntarily expanded to receive her, and for a minute held her in an embrace so strenuous to his heart, as to check the faint scream which was bursting from her lips, at his unexpected sight,

Then a little recovering himself, “ Elvina,” he cried, “ you have conquered. Oh! what were I, could I permit the sacrifice you have resolved on; could I permit the punishment due to my misdeeds to light on thy guiltless head, the bolt, aimed by retributive justice, to fall on thee! Honour, humanity, all that is noble in my nature, all that is paternal in my heart, forbid the idea; to thy virtues I owe my life—I now owe them more; yes, daughter of suffering and of patience, how great, how mighty will thy transport be, when I tell thee, that to them I owe the reformation of my heart, the overthrow of all those direful passions, which have so long agitated it; to them an earthly monarch granted my life, to them a mightier than he has granted this change in my feelings: I repeat it, you have conquered, and at length am I worthy of the title of thy father.”

Great, indeed surpassing any she had ever before experienced, was the transport of Elvina at what she now heard. Her views extended beyond this narrow sphere, and to think that those dreadful passions, those implacable feelings, so inimical to felicity here, so destructive to all hope of it hereafter, were no longer in existence; that by the conquest of them, by his determination of making atonement for every injury they had led to, there was no longer any thing to cloud her father’s prospects of a happy immortality among the spirits of the just above, of their enjoying together, in the ethereal fields of heaven, happiness unspeakable as well as eternal, was a rapture, an ecstacy, too great for description, which fully, amply compensated for every recent suffering.

Utterance for some minutes was denied her, but her beaming countenance, uplifted to heaven, eloquently expressed all she felt; then turning to her father, “ Oh, my father!” she cried, “ such, such are the feelings of this moment, methinks nothing is wanting to complete my happiness.”

“ Yet you will, by the rising of tomorrow’s sun, be convinced, I make no doubt, cried the duke, tenderly pressing her hand, “ that it is capable of addition. Be not alarmed,” he continued, perceiving by her countenance that she perfectly comprehended what he meant; “ true, I intend to follow Don Ferdinand; but I know his generous nature too well, not to be convinced, that to his bosom, as to a holy and inviolable sanctuary, I may safely intrust every secret of my soul; I shall be abashed, I shall be humbled by my confession to him, but some expiation is due for my conduct.”

To dwell longer on this scene were superfluous; he led her back to the castle, and immediately hastened after Don Ferdinand. Scarcely had he entered upon his intended explanation, ere the noble Ferdinand suddenly comprehended all it would unfold, endeavoured, from those feelings of delicacy and generosity peculiar to minds like his, to prevent his continuing it; but the duke having entered upon it, was determined on going through with it, not so much out of justice to his daughter, for he already saw Don Ferdinand did her justice, as from feeling this generosity more insupportable than the self-humiliation it excited. On concluding, “ You now,” cried he, “ know to what to impute that silence which so afflicted you; and if still, after what you have heard, you can desire my alliance, if the virtues of the daughter are too fascinating, too dazzling, to permit you to dwell on the failings of the father, Elvina is yours.”

The struggling feelings of Ferdinand would not, for a minute, allow him to speak; but while he involuntarily averted his countenance, to conceal emotions he could not immediately subdue, the fervent pressure of his hand gave the duke to understand what he would have said, had language been allowed him at the instant.

“ I will not,” he cried, when he had a little recovered himself, “ wrong the feelings of this moment

so much, as to attempt to give them utterance ; I shall merely allow myself to say, that if you indeed mean, if you indeed wish to render my happiness complete, you will not, by a word, a look, a hint, ever revert to the recent communication ; from this instant, let the silence of oblivion rest on it."

The impatience to throw himself at the feet of his lovely mistress was not checked ; and as the duke had said, ere the rising sun had well beamed upon her, she found, by the emotions she experienced at his sight, that her happiness, great and pure as she had previously conceived it, was capable of addition : the arrival of Olivia completed the joy of this happy day ; her rapture, at the tidings that awaited her, may easier be conceived than described.

Immediate preparations were ordered for the nuptials of the interesting pair, those nuptials which had so long been wished for, yet despaired of, and which, as a bond of union between their long-contending houses, were heard of with pleasure by the partizans of each.

But in the contemplation of her happiness, Elvina could not become unmindful of that of others ; she rested not till she had effected a reconciliation between the duke and Don Felix de Lara, with whom, owing to some misunderstanding, he had, for some years, been on terms of coolness, and whose expectations the intention she had announced to him had so highly raised, nor, his fortune being rather limited, till she had obtained an establishment for him and his daughter, the fair Rozella, in the castle.

Her happiness, though great, was not, however, uninterrupted. Alas ! seldom is the cup of joy raised to our lips, without some bitter being cast into it : the knot which bound her for life to her Ferdinand, was scarcely tied, ere he was called away to take a high command in the army destined to act against Portugal, which, by this time, had unanimously declared for the brother of the late king, to the exclusion of his daughter from the throne. The hour which

witnessed his departure, beheld his lovely bride at the altar, where, but a few days before, she had plighted him her irrevocable vows, solemnly consecrating her future days to solitude, should it be the will of Heaven that in this world they should meet no more.

Many were the lingering months that elapsed, ere her suspense and anxiety concerning him were at an end ; the tedious siege that Lisbon underwent, and at which Sir Lorenzo d'Acunha fell, the memorable circumstance to which its being at length raised was owing, and the subsequent defeat, and complete discomfiture of the Castilians, at the abbey of Algibarrotá, are all events too well known to need recapitulation here. Suffice it, that after a long experience of difficulties, dangers, and privations, Ferdinand at length returned to the uninterrupted enjoyment of that happiness he so eminently merited with his Elvina—that happiness which had been so cruelly interrupted by his being torn away from her, almost at the very moment that authorized him to call her his.

And now his friend, Don Julio, who had also returned in safety with him, solicited, and soon obtained, the hand of the fair Rozella, with whom he had become acquainted at his nuptials, but whom he had then

“ —Look'd upon with a soldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand,
Than to drive liking to the name of love.”

In the enjoyment of the calm produced by his altered feelings, the duke reviewed with a degree of astonishment, the long indulgence he had given to turbulent passions ; and, at length, convinced by experience, that the prodigality of fortune is insufficient to bestow happiness, without a well regulated mind, carefully guarded against relapsing into any of those violences which had so long rendered him an enemy to his own repose, and that of others.

F I N I S.







JUL 12 1938

